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Memoirs of the Sidney Family







SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

[Frontispiece.

From an engraving of Zuccheri's Portrait in the Penshurst Collection.)



# Memoirs of the Sidney Family

By Philip Sidney



*Illustrated*

London

T. Fisher Unwin

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## PREFACE



THE object of this work will be greatly misinterpreted if considered as merely designing to offer to the notice of the public the domestic memoirs of a single family. Its object is, in fact, to produce in a brief and convenient form, the story of a race which played, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, so important a part in English politics, that this little book may, with all its faults (and they are many), humbly claim to rank as a useful footnote to the history of Great Britain.

Of its numerous shortcomings I am fully aware. It should have been, in the first place, to render full justice to its subject, of thrice its present bulk. But *magnum in parvo* has been my object throughout, and my whole aim has been concen-

trated in striving to combine within the covers of one handy volume a concise and correct biography of the Sidneys of Penshurst, from the time of Sir William, the Chamberlain to Henry VIII., down to the death of Lord Romney, in the reign of Anne. I have by no means intended to supersede, in any particular, previous biographies of the most illustrious members of the Sidney family. It would have indeed been difficult to improve upon the excellent "Life of Algernon Sidney," written by Ewald; upon the memoir of Sir Henry Sidney published in the fifty-second volume of the "National Biography" (Smith and Elder); or upon either Fox Bourne's "Sir Philip Sidney" (Heroes of the Nations Series), or Mr. J. A. Symonds's criticism of Sir Philip as an author (English Men of Letters Series). It would afford no easy task to compile a more interesting or capacious treatise than that of Collins, in his "Sydney Papers." But with regard to this last it must, unfortunately, be condemned as containing many gross genealogical errors, as well as culpable suppressions of the truth. Collins' volumes are, moreover, too scarce and too bulky to be of access to the ordinary reader.

In confessing my faults, according to chronological order, I must apologise for curtailing my account of the campaigns of Sir Henry Sidney in Ireland; for omitting to furnish a more lengthy discussion of the literary career of Sir Philip; for refraining from entering upon, from a legal point of view, a sufficiently detailed description of the trial of Algernon Sidney.

I have, in dealing with Henry, Earl of Romney, who played the leading *rôle* in the great drama which terminated in the bloodless invasion of England by William of Orange, essayed to depict him in a far more favourable light than he has been represented in the History of Lord Macaulay. As to his brother, Colonel Robert Sidney, I must perhaps plead guilty to having wandered somewhat from the narrow path of orthodox history when touching upon the doubts surrounding the parentage of James, Duke of Monmouth. All competent critics will, nevertheless, I think, admit my success in disposing of certain ridiculous genealogical errors, in addition to numerous false dates, copied, as a rule, by the biographers of Sir Philip and others of his family from Collins' "Papers."

In the production of a work whose accuracy depends so largely on a copious reference to recognised authorities, I have deemed it best to pay off my debt to those authorities I have consulted by conveying, in one long table, a list of the various works whence my information has been derived.

With regard to the illustrations, I beg to tender my grateful thanks, respectively, to the Marquis of Salisbury, Earl Spencer, and Lord De L'Isle and Dudley, for permission to publish engravings from the original portraits in their possession.

To the Director of the National Portrait Gallery I am specially obliged for permission to print an engraving of the portrait of Sir Henry Sidney, in the National Collection.

To the authorities at the Record Office and Library of the British Museum, I am indebted for permission to publish facsimiles of the handwriting of Sir Philip Sidney.

THE AUTHOR.

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Berry's Kent and Sussex Genealogies.  
Blencowe's Edition of Lord Romney's Diary.  
Blencowe's Sydney Papers.  
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Butler's Sidneiana (Roxburghe Club).  
Calendar of State Papers (Tudor Period: Domestic  
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Evelyn's Diary.  
Ewald's Life of Algernon Sidney.  
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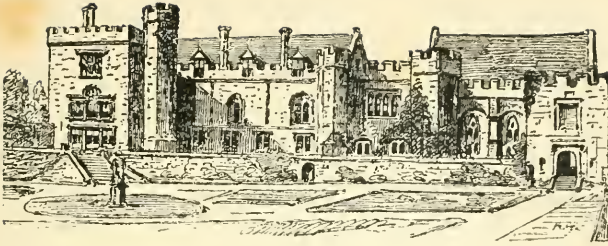
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## CORRIGENDA

- Page 55, line 2, *for* "that" read "those."
- „ 116, line 13, *erase* (1603-1604).
- „ 181, line 6, *erase* "of people."
- „ 188, line 11, read "animum," *not* "animos."
- „ 214, line 16, *omit* "Queen."
- „ 216, footnote "2" should precede footnote "1"
- „ 219, in Rough Genealogical Sketch of the Sidneys *erase* "K.G." *after* Sir William Sidney.







# Memoirs of the Sidney Family



## CHAPTER I

### ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE SIDNEYS

THE race of Sidney takes its place amongst the most ancient and distinguished in the chronicles of English history. Few of our old houses can boast a lineage more remote or an escutcheon more unstained. During the epoch of the Tudor and the Stewart, the Sidneys produced a long line of illustrious men that, if equalled, was never surpassed during those periods by any other family on the roll of our nobility. Before the close of the seventeenth century, indeed, so highly were

their talents praised and their virtues sung, that it had become a common saying "All their men were brave, and all their ladies pure"!

Before initiating a detailed account of the lives of its more famous members, it will be proper and convenient to trace briefly the story of the family from (so far as is known of) its origin down to the period of Sir Henry Sidney, who governed both Wales and Ireland as the viceroy of Queen Elizabeth. Thus, the first of that ilk whom we find mentioned in this country is Sir William de Sidenie, who accompanied Henry II. to England on his accession to the throne in 1154 and received the office of Chamberlain to the monarch, with a grant of land in the counties of Surrey and Sussex. This knight was descended from an ancestry possessed of much wealth and influence in Normandy and Anjou, where its pedigree can be proved to extend back upwards of some two centuries before the coming of the Conqueror into England. From the time of this Sir William (who was buried in the Lady Chapel of Lewes Priory, 1188) until the reign of Henry VII., his posterity, although sending representatives to the Crusades and Agincourt, lived for the

most part the lives of country squires, intermarrying with some of the best families among the nobility and gentry, and frequently obtaining the honour of knighthood. But it was reserved for Nicholas Sidney, *temp.* Edward IV., to found the fortunes of his descendants by an alliance contracted with Anne Brandon,<sup>1</sup> aunt of Charles, Duke of Suffolk, the husband of Mary, sister to Henry VIII., and widow of Louis XII. of France. By this marriage of Nicholas, his descendants became enabled, through the Brandons, to deduce their descent from William I. and from the ancient Kings of Scotland. Nicholas had by his wife, Anne, four sons and one daughter; namely William, Thomas, Robert, Francis, and Thomasiné.

It is at this point in the family annals that the legion of genealogists who have so industriously in many cases written on the subject, have completely gone astray. Even the great Collins, whose errors have been copied by a whole herd of imitators, is here most culpably at sea, and has stated, in common with the rest, that Nicholas had only one son, William. This mistake is the more inexcusable, inasmuch as one of the remaining sons, Francis,

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Notes: "Lady Jane Grey,"

was a man of some celebrity, holding the honourable and influential post of Lieutenant of the Tower of London. To such an extent has Collins, for example, augmented his error that when he finds a relation in Holinshed of Francis' presence and active participation in a tournament, he actually declares that no such person existed! By the several biographers of Sir Philip Sidney, in rendering a description of his ancestry, this mistake has also been freely adopted.

Sir William Sidney,<sup>1</sup> Kt., the eldest son of Nicholas, was destined to pass a career of no ordinary distinction and splendour, living to see the fortunes of his son in a fair way to prove as successful as his own. He was the lifelong, trusty servant and counsellor of Henry VIII., whom he served with a fidelity worthy of a better master. Appointed, when a young man, an Esquire of the Body to the King, his first public service, in 1510, comprised a journey into Spain, whither he accompanied Lord Darcy with a force, to fight for Spain against the Moors, and where he refused the offer of a title from the Spanish monarch. On his return home he served in some very hard fighting between

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Notes : "The Name of Sidney."

the French and English fleets, and was knighted for his valour. In 1513 he commanded a division at the battle of Flodden Field, behaving with such courage and distinction as to receive a yearly pension and a grant of lands from Henry. In the following year he went on a pleasure visit to Paris to assist at the coronation of Mary Tudor, in company with several nobles and gentlemen. During their stay they astonished the French, not only by their prowess displayed in a series of tournaments, but also by the magnificence of their equipage and attire.

Although afterwards present at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, Sir William's further connection with his foes, the French, was again to be of a hostile character, fighting with them once more on sea, and afterwards on land under his relative, the Duke of Suffolk. On the conclusion of his military services he was made Chamberlain and Steward of the Royal Household, and was promised by Henry the honour of being enrolled a Knight of the Garter, a promise, which, however, was never carried out.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Ady, in her account of "Sacharissa," states that Sir William was given a Garter in 1541, but he was never made a K.G., either in the reign of Henry VIII. or Edward VI.

After the death of the royal Bluebeard, Sir William was employed as Tutor, Chamberlain, and Steward to Edward VI., from whom he received the magnificent gift of the Crown manor of Penshurst and adjoining property, in Kent. Dying in 1553, at the age of seventy-two, the stalwart old soldier was buried at Penshurst, leaving behind him by his wife, Anne, one son, Henry, and four daughters. Of the son Henry a memoir follows in the next chapter. All the four daughters were so lucky as to make great matches, whereby the eldest became an ancestress of Lord Bolingbroke, the statesman ; the second, an ancestress of the noble houses of Montague and North ; the third, an ancestress of Lord Byron, the poet. The fourth married the Earl of Sussex, but left no issue.

## CHAPTER II

SIR HENRY SIDNEY, K.G., VICEROY OF IRELAND  
AND PRESIDENT OF WALES

(1529-1586.)

### I.

SIR HENRY SIDNEY is one of those few illustrious Englishmen who have received insufficient attention at the hands of the historian. Amongst the many famous statesmen and soldiers of the Elizabethan age he takes deservedly high rank. Than him, no public servant of his time served his Queen and country with more fidelity or success. The world is familiar with the story of his brilliant son, who hardly lived to reach mature manhood, yet of Sir Henry himself, employed in the thankless task of governing Ireland as Lord Deputy during the most turbulent of all the turbulent periods through which that island has passed, and for a quarter of a century the ruler of Wales,

it knows comparatively little. Comparisons are always odious, more or less, but without inflicting any injustice upon the reputation of either Sir Philip or Algernon Sidney, it may be safely declared, without fear of contradiction, that Sir Henry was the greatest character which his family, the Sidneys of Penshurst, ever produced.

The only son of Sir William, the gallant captain renowned for his exploits on both land and sea, Henry Sidney, from his boyhood upwards, had laid before him the promise of a splendid future. His parent's interest at Court pushed him into a position of importance at an early age. Sir William being Tutor and Comptroller of the Household to Edward, Prince of Wales, Henry<sup>1</sup> and the Prince thus became constant companions. From companions, they became inseparable and fast friends. After the succession of the "boy-king," Henry was appointed one of the gentlemen of his Privy Chamber. In 1550, when scarcely one and twenty years old, he was knighted.

<sup>1</sup> In Sir Henry's own words, "I was by that most famous king, Henry VIII., put to his sweet son, Prince Edward, my most dear master, my near kinswoman being his only Nurse, my Father his Chamberlain, my Mother his Governess, my Aunt," &c.





SIR HENRY SIDNEY, K.G.

*(Specially engraved, from a Photograph by Walker & Boullard of the Portrait in the National Collection.)*

*(Facing p. 8.)*



Only one piece of policy was wanting to strengthen his already strong position: an important marriage. In this he was equally fortunate. He espoused, in 1551, the Lady Mary Dudley,<sup>1</sup> eldest daughter of the *de facto* ruler of the realm, the Duke of Northumberland. This marriage not only made his own fortunes, but those of his descendants. He reaped the full benefit of the power wielded by that family, both in the reign of Edward and in the reign of Elizabeth, when Robert, Earl of Leicester, was the prime favourite of his sovereign. By this marriage, moreover, on the death of Leicester's elder brother, Ambrose, Earl of Warwick, the Sidneys became heirs of the Dudleys, two of whose titles were subsequently revived in their favour; several of whose estates they were bequeathed, and whose badge<sup>2</sup> they added to their escutcheon.

John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, and his relations wielded, from the fall of Somerset until the death of Edward, a power such as no single family ever had in England since the days of Warwick,

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Notes: "Genealogy of the Dudleys."

<sup>2</sup> A bear, erect, muzzled, collared, chained, and holding a ragged staff.

“the last of the Barons”; such as no single family has ever wielded since, with the exception of the years when Cromwell reigned as an “uncrowned king.” Sir Henry’s alliance with such a race, therefore, spelt good-luck, whilst his wife proved of great help to him, for she was a sweet woman, of a kinder heart and disposition than her father and brothers. She made, in addition, an excellent and devoted mother, and of the deep affection she felt for her children ample evidence is forthcoming in the pages of her husband’s correspondence.

On July 6, 1553, Edward VI. died at Greenwich, at the early age of fifteen, in the arms of Sir Henry Sidney, whereby the Dudleys were left masters of England, and Lady Jane, the wife of Lord Guildford Dudley, was promoted to the throne. For a few days it looked as if they had established a new dynasty. But it was for a few days only. Northumberland’s supporters gradually deserted him for Mary, the legitimate heiress. He and his, within a very short space of time, exchanged the comforts of a palace for the confinement of a prison. Vengeance on these family conspirators was both speedy and sure. Northumberland was beheaded in August, 1553. His eldest

son,<sup>1</sup> Lord Warwick, after imprisonment in the Tower, died, worn out, at Penshurst, in the following year, when Lord Guildford, Lady Jane, and the Duke of Suffolk were also sent to the block. Sir Henry Sidney alone escaped scot-free.

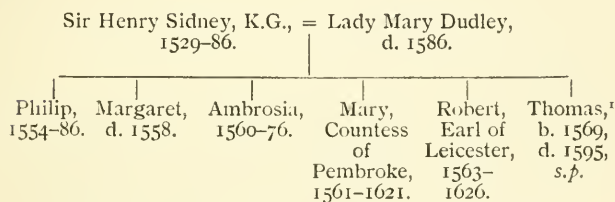
But even he experienced a narrow escape. Although making no delay in proffering his allegiance to Queen Mary, to whose exclusion he had never been a party, he laid himself open to grave suspicion of having aided his father-in-law in persuading Edward to draw up a will in favour of Lady Jane. Every effort, in fact, was made by the enemies of his house to implicate him in the conspiracy. He withdrew,<sup>2</sup> protesting his innocence, to Penshurst, daily expecting a summons of surrender from the Court, but none came. Threats were made of confiscating his estates, yet these too proved but mere rumours. Throughout the reign of Mary he never com-

<sup>1</sup> Many writers have incorrectly stated that he died in the Tower of London, in 1553.

<sup>2</sup> Collins quite fails to grasp Sir Henry's reasons for retiring to Penshurst, when he says, most absurdly: "I conjecture that his sorrow for the King, his master, induced him to retire to his seat at Penshurst, whereby he was not involved in the calamities which befell the Duke of Northumberland."

pletely recovered his lost ground, "neither liking nor being liked as he had been!" But "a friend in need is a friend indeed," and Sir Henry was not long in finding such a friend, and that in a most unlikely quarter. This was no less a personage than the King-Consort, Philip of Spain, whom he had been sent to escort on his journey to England, and who, notwithstanding Sir Henry's staunch Protestantism, proved a kind and generous protector. Out of gratitude, therefore, Sir Henry christened his eldest son after King Philip, whose godson he became. In this unlooked-for kindness there lurked, undoubtedly, good policy. The Spanish monarch and his advisers quickly foresaw the dangers attendant on the too bigoted religious policy of the Queen. Neither Philip nor his Confessor ever countenanced one of the persecutions against the Protestants. On the contrary, they lifted up their voices for moderation, but without avail. In bestowing his patronage upon Sir Henry, Philip gracefully showed that he at least did not bear, or pretended not to bear, any animosity against the deposed faction which had nearly frustrated his wife's succession to the throne.

While alluding to Philip Sidney, it will be well to seize this opportunity of enumerating the other children born to Sir Henry and Lady Mary. Much the simplest way to accomplish this is to append the following minute genealogical sketch viz :—



## II.

Thomas Radcliffe, Earl of Sussex, who had married Frances Sidney, having been appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland, was accompanied to the country under his command by his brother-in-law, Sir Henry, as a member of his staff, in May, 1556. In a campaign against the insurgent Irish—a campaign that was to prove the forerunner of many others—Sir Henry greatly distinguished

<sup>1</sup> Julius Lloyd, in his "Life of Sir Philip Sidney," incorrectly calls him "William." For information concerning him, see Notes: "Thomas Sidney."

himself, killing with his own hands James MacConell,<sup>1</sup> one of the most formidable of the belligerent chieftains. In 1558, Sir Henry succeeded Sussex as Lord Deputy for a brief period, spent in hard hand-to-hand fighting in Ulster. In 1559, Sussex returned to Ireland, and Sir Henry was appointed to the high office of Lord President of Wales, an office which he retained until his death, occupying as his official residence the fine old castle of Ludlow, in Shropshire. In happy contrast to his Irish duties, his employment here was of a far more pacific nature, for he could devote attention to the education of his children, lead the life of a country gentleman, indulge in field sports, and find leisure to visit Penshurst and the Court. It was owing entirely to this residence at Ludlow that his sons, Philip and Thomas, received their education at Shrewsbury School. It was while Philip, aged twelve, was being educated at Shrewsbury that Sir Henry wrote him a celebrated letter of fatherly advice. I say "celebrated," because many portions of the letter

<sup>1</sup> This chieftain, who seems to have been a veritable "wild Irishman," has had his name spelt in so many different ways, that I cannot for certain claim to have hit upon the correct orthography.



have often been quoted as furnishing examples of true parental kindness and wisdom. Some of them follow below, but rendered into modern orthography :—

“ SON PHILIP,—I have received two letters from you, one written in Latin, the other in French. . . . Since this is my first letter that ever I did write to you, I will not that it be empty of some advices, which my natural care of you provoketh me to wish you to follow as documents to you, in this your tender age.

“ Let your first action be the lifting up of your mind to Almighty God by hearty prayer, and feelingly digest the words you speak in prayer, with continual meditation and thinking of Him to whom you pray, and of the matter for which you pray. And use this as an ordinary act, and at an ordinary hour, whereby \*the time itself shall put you in remembrance of that you are accustomed to do in that time. . . .

“ Be humble and obedient to your masters, for, unless you frame yourself to obey others, yea, and feel in yourself what obedience is, you shall never be able to teach others how to obey you.

“Be courteous of gesture, and affable to all men, with diversity of reverence, according to the dignity of the person. There is nothing that winneth so much with little cost.

“Use moderate diet, so as after your meal you may find your wit fresher and not duller, and your body more lively and not more heavy. Seldom drink wine, and yet sometimes do; lest, being enforced to drink upon the sudden, you should find yourself enflamed. . . .

“Give yourself to be merry; for you degenerate from your Father if you find not yourself most able in wit and body to do anything when you are most merry. But let your mirth be ever void of all scurrility and biting words to any man; for a wound given by a word is oftentimes harder to be cured than that which is given by the sword. . . .

“Think upon every word that you will speak before you utter it, and remember how nature hath ramparted up, as it were, the tongue with teeth, lips, yea, and hair without the lips, and all betokening reins and bridles for the loose use of that member.

“Above all things, tell no untruth, no, not in

trifles. The custom of it is naughty. . . . For there cannot be a greater reproach to a gentleman than to be accounted a liar. . . .

“Remember, my son, the noble blood you are descended of by your mother’s side; and think that only by virtuous life and good action you may be an ornament to that illustrious family. Otherwise, through vice and sloth, you may be accounted ‘labes generis,’ one of the greatest curses that can happen to man. . . .

“Your loving father, so long as you live in the fear of God,

“H. SIDNEY.”

No wonder that, with a father so wise and prudent, three of his four surviving children should have become famous.

That Sir Henry was well pleased with his tenure of office at Ludlow, may be considered certain by the fact of his bearing witness: “Better people to govern than the Welsh, Europe holdeth not!”

## III.

In the spring of 1562 Sir Henry was despatched on a diplomatic errand to France, with the object of secretly lending help to strengthen the position of the Huguenots. On his return he was sent to Scotland,<sup>1</sup> carrying the excuses of his crafty royal mistress for refusing to hold an interview with Queen Mary. In 1564 he was enrolled a Knight of the Garter.

Meanwhile, the condition of things in the Emerald Isle had been steadily growing worse. The successive governorships of Lord Sussex and Sir Nicholas Arnold had effected little towards the pacification of the country. A new Lord Deputy was necessary. Elizabeth turned to Sir Henry, who, with some misgivings, accepted the appointment, gazetted in October, 1565.

From the period of this appointment commences a prolonged duel waged between Sidney and Elizabeth over pecuniary matters—a duel that was to cause Sir Henry more trouble, more distress, more privations, and more annoyance than all the

<sup>1</sup> This was not his only mission to Scotland, for he was again sent there in 1568.

other worries of an arduous official life put together. Elizabeth was a true granddaughter of Henry VII., for she was, like him, by no means lavish in money matters. Presents and supplies must ever be bestowed upon her, but as for making any concessions in her turn, it was out of the question. The miserly spirit which induced her to deprive even the brave sailors who fought against the Armada of their proper amount of ammunition induced her to dock Sir Henry of his proper amount of salary for his most expensive office. It was in vain that he would plead the terrible expenses entailed by his government at Dublin, his wars, his marches, his journeying to and from one province to another. Elizabeth proved remorseless. No matter how brilliant the triumphs he achieved, Sir Henry was always met by his royal mistress with the constant charge of extravagance.

Things were at their worst when the Lord Deputy—after the loss by shipwreck of all “his stuff and horses”—arrived in Dublin at the commencement of the year 1566. From the moment of his arrival his troubles began. It was even an open question at first whether he would make headway

against one man alone. This was the famous Shan O'Neil, who ruled Ulster with an iron hand for his own lawless and sanguinary ends. "In Ulster," wrote home the perplexed Viceroy, "there tyrannizeth the prince of pride; Lucifer was never more puffed up with pride and ambition than that O'Neil. He is at present the only strong and rich man in Ireland, and he is the dangourest man and most like to bring the whole estate of this land to subversion and subjugation either to him or to some foreign prince, that ever was in Ireland."

To deal with Shan, who was a strange compound of cut-throat and feudal lord, Sir Henry first had recourse to diplomacy. But Shan was not to be caught by sweet speeches. Even the offer of an earldom proved bait insufficiently alluring to the descendant of a line of Irish Princes. Finally, therefore, Sir Henry, driven to his wits' end to know how to tame the unruly monster, who was all the time in correspondence with Spain, proclaimed him an outlaw. "If," wrote Sir Henry, "it be an angel of heaven that will say that ever O'Neil will be a good subject till he be thoroughly chastised, believe him not,

but think him a spirit of error. Surely if the Queen do not chastise him in Ulster, he will chase all hers out of Ireland. Her Majesty must make up her mind to the expense, and chastise this cannibal."

After a long and difficult campaign, Shan was at length effectually "chastised." Driven from refuge to refuge, he was at length set upon by the rival clan of the O'Donnells, who, seeing how the luck was changing, were induced to espouse the cause of the English. Shan, in a drunken bout, was stabbed to death, and his head forwarded to Sir Henry, "pickled in a pipkin," to be placed as a trophy over the gateway of Dublin Castle.

"How just Sidney's calculations had been," records Mr. Froude in his "History," regarding the defeat and death of Shan, "how ably his plans were conceived, how bravely they were carried out, was proved by their entire success. . . . In one season Ireland was reduced to universal peace and submission. While the world was full of Sidney's praises, Elizabeth persevered in writing letters to him, which Cecil, in his own name and the name of the Council, was obliged to disclaim. But at last the Queen too became gradually gracious."

But Shan was not Sir Henry's only deadly foe. He had another of less open but more insidious character in the person of Thomas Butler, Earl of Ormonde. This nobleman, who preferred the luxury of London life to that of his own wild country, never missed a chance of striving to poison Elizabeth's ear against the Viceroy. To counter-balance this treachery needed an exertion of all Leicester's influence. The quarrel too was rendered the more bitter by the circumstance that Ormonde, according to the everlasting custom of his countrymen, was embroiled in a feud with another Irish nobleman, Gerald Fitzgerald, Earl of Desmond. In the dispute between the pair, Sir Henry was forced to act as umpire, and with rare partiality gave his verdict in favour of Ormonde. This upright piece of justice cost him the hitherto firm friendship of Desmond,<sup>1</sup> who lost his temper with Sir Henry, openly upbraided him, and was in consequence put under arrest. By the summer of

<sup>1</sup> For some time Sir Henry refused to arbitrate until he had obtained the assistance of a fellow-umpire. Writing to Cecil (April, 1567), he says: "I will never, unpresed, upon my allegiance, deal in the great matters of my Lord of Ormonde until another Chancellor come . . . for however indifferently I shall deal, I know it will not be thought favourably enough on my Lord of Ormonde's side."



1567 Sir Henry, having also arrested the turbulent sons of Lord Clanricarde, had the satisfaction of being able to write home that he had completed the subjection of Ulster, but suffering from ill-health,<sup>1</sup> was permitted to return to England.

At their own request Sir Henry was accompanied by several Irish chiefs to the English Court, where their uncouth manners, quaint language, and unfashionable apparel created much sensation and amusement. Elizabeth, hearing of the approach of Sir Henry's train at Hampton Court, leant, it appears, out of the window to view the procession. On one of her ladies commenting on the number of the gentlemen who accompanied the Viceroy, she remarked that "his train might well be large, considering that he had two of the best offices in England." She carefully omitted to mention that the value of these two offices was reduced to a minimum by the non-payment of the sum of Sir Henry's salaries.

<sup>1</sup> He was suffering from stone. A complete diagnosis of his case by the doctors has been preserved. To show the advance made since then in medical science, it is interesting to quote that, according to these Elizabethan physicians, "whoever hath a stone of enie bigness, conformid either in his kidnes or bladder, if he be of any age, can never be cured."

Sir Henry's reception at Court was cold enough to break the heart of any man of courageous temperament. Elizabeth professed to be horrified at the cost of his expeditions in Ireland. She accordingly pretended that he had erred from excess of zeal. She invented a score of pretences to excuse herself. Shane O'Neil, she said, was only a robber chieftain, a mere highwayman, whose defeat could have been accomplished with far less difficulty and expense. His warfare with the Viceroy was a mere "scuffle." She finished her tirade by sending Desmond, who had come over with Sir Henry, to the Tower. Such was the manner in which the Queen thought fit to reward the exploits of a gallant general and governor, who had risked his health, his fortune, and his life in her service.

But with the public at large Sir Henry's services were highly esteemed. He was the hero of popular ballads; the story of his campaigns was the theme of admiration in every family circle, at every street corner, in the parlour of every village inn. Even Cecil, hitherto by no means too well disposed towards him, turned round and joined in the applause.

Elizabeth, moreover, quickly discovered that Ireland could not be left without a strong hand at the helm. In his retirement at Penshurst, where he occupied himself in building a new suite of rooms, Sir Henry was asked to resume his governorship. With many forebodings of further treachery on the part of the Queen, he ultimately acceded to the request, and went back to Ireland in the autumn of 1568. Early in the following year he opened Parliament at Dublin with much state, and ordered that in future its Acts should be printed and published.

For no less than two years following he was engaged in further fighting, chiefly in the south, the opposition of the Butlers proving his chief obstacle. After once more bringing matters to a triumphant issue, he went home in March, 1571.

Disgusted still with the parsimony of his royal mistress, he seems to have abandoned all wish and intention of returning to Ireland, and for a space of four years occupied himself with his duties in Wales. On making application for payment of his salary so long in arrears, the Queen offered, instead of recompensing him, to create him a peer. But this artifice was too thin to deceive. Instead

of receiving money, the acceptance of a peerage would actually involve, *per contra*, paying it away. It would be a pecuniary gain to the Crown, and a pecuniary loss to himself. It would, besides, raise him very little in rank, seeing that he was the Viceroy of one kingdom and the ex-Viceroy of another. He refused to nibble at the bait, and only offered to consider even the proposed honour if the Queen would allow him a salary proportionate to a more exalted station. This the Queen abruptly refused, and the elevation of a Sidney to the Peerage was delayed for thirty years. With respect to the negotiations leading to this offer and refusal, it is amusing to read the part taken by Lady Mary, who quickly saw through the royal plan, and she besought Cecil to leave her husband's rank undisturbed in such piteous terms that the matter in question might have been something in the light of a terrible infliction rather than a peerage.

#### IV.

Once more, at the call of duty, did Sir Henry leave Wales for Ireland. This time, although as

usual things had relapsed into a tangled state during his absence, with brighter pecuniary prospects, Elizabeth having assented to pay him a regular fixed salary, due quarterly. But this salary, large though it was, never adequately met the heavy strain of expenditure to which he was subjected, and his private fortune was again put under restraint to meet the encumbrances occasioned by official work.

His first fresh task was the repacification of Ulster. To attain this his policy was both clever and comprehensive. He divided the province into counties, established schools, introduced teachers from England, built numerous bridges, and invited colonists to settle there. He next pursued the same course with Connaught. The subjection of both provinces was accomplished only by more hard fighting and campaigning in the stress of winter, his chief opponents in this guerilla warfare being the lawless sons of Lord Clanricarde.

By the end of 1576 Sir Henry's persecution at the hands of Elizabeth broke out afresh. She began to demur at having to pay him his salary, and tried to revoke it. His enemies speedily whispered to her that he was reckless and

extravagant. A dispute between him and the gentry of the Pale over the manner they should pay their annual tax brought the quarrel to its head. The Queen, with monstrous ingratitude, accused him of being a "too costly servant," and of "alienating from her the hearts of her subjects"! This was more than flesh and blood could stand. In the vehemence of his wrath, Sir Henry thundered in reply that but for being engaged in the midst of a campaign against a turbulent and murderous chieftain, called Rory Oge O'More, he would have resigned his office and quitted Ireland without leave. Luckily for him, Rory gave him no leisure, so that he was unable to put into execution a threat that might have lost him his liberty.

Rory Oge ultimately came to the same violent death as had previously the daring Shan O'Neil. He was killed by a rival clansman, Barnaby Fitzpatrick, at Christmastide, 1578. Sir Henry had too the satisfaction of declaring at Kilkenny that he had at last reduced Ireland to enjoy a fair measure of tranquillity. But in spite of this, the intrigues against him, notwithstanding the powerful influence exerted in his favour by Leicester, his son Philip, Sir Francis Walsingham, and his wife,

carried the day at Court. Hints were given that her Majesty longed for an excuse to recall him, and that he had best keep on his guard and "act warily." In September, 1578, broken in spirit and sick in health, at enmity with Elizabeth, he sailed from Ireland, the country that he had ruled so wisely and so justly for the last time. On the partial recovery of his health, he resumed his tenure of office at Ludlow. But even there the malice of Elizabeth pursued him. It was urged that he did not sufficiently persecute the Catholics living under his jurisdiction. But like his son Philip, he objected to inflict on the persecuted gentry of the old religion the heavy fines and incarcerations to which the Government continually subjected them.

There is nothing during the remainder of his existence that calls for special comment. In 1582, on the alarm of another rebellion in Ireland, Elizabeth stooped so low as to ask the servant she had so ill repaid to once more unsheath his sword there on her behalf. But this time she had reckoned without her host. Worn out with premature old age, Sir Henry preferred to stay at home, unless the Queen would consent to Philip,

his son, accompanying him to Ireland, and soon succeeding him in his Viceroyalty. Elizabeth declined to relinquish her favourite, so Sir Henry passed the rest of his days in peace, busied in attending to his Welsh office, dying at Worcester<sup>1</sup> on May 5, 1586.

His faithful consort, Lady Mary, followed him to the grave three months later, and his beloved son, Philip, at an interval of only two months after Lady Mary.

Sir Henry's corpse was, at the express order of Elizabeth, conveyed from the Bishop's Palace at Worcester, with a ceremonial of most extraordinary magnificence, by slow stages, to its interment at Penshurst in June. His heart was buried at Ludlow.

## V.

Notwithstanding the cold treatment of her faithful lieutenant by Queen Elizabeth, it is interesting to note that, when financial concerns were not at stake, relations between the pair were of

<sup>1</sup> Collins and others incorrectly state that he died at Ludlow. His death was due to a chill caught upon the Severn.



a more cordial nature than might have been expected. Elizabeth paid a visit in State to Penshurst, where she danced with Leicester at a ball given in her honour. She made his wife several presents. She even addressed him as "Harry" in her letters. Yet, despite all this, there can be no doubt, on the whole, she treated him with scant justice. She never seemed to evince the least gratitude to him for his Irish and other services, although his life was undoubtedly shortened by the exertions and privations incurred on her behalf. Lady Mary, in another way, suffered as much as Sir Henry, for whilst nursing the Queen through an attack of the small-pox, she was so unlucky as to catch the dread disease herself, with the result that she was most foully disfigured for the rest of her life. "Henceforth," writes Fulke Greville, "she chose rather to hide herself from the curious eyes of a delicate time than come upon the stage of the world with any manner of disparagement; this mischance of sickness having cast such a veil over her excellent beauty as the modesty of that sex doth many times upon their native and heroical spirits."

It has been argued that Sir Henry suffered, from

a political point of view, during Elizabeth's reign from his relationship to Leicester. But this was not so. Leicester, with all his faults, proved a staunch friend and generous relation, and was especially kind to his brother-in-law. It was by his bounty that a fine dowry (for those days) was bestowed on his niece, Mary, at her espousals with Lord Pembroke. The rapid progress effected by Sir Philip at Court was also due to his exertions. It is probable, however, that Leicester's enemies considered Sir Henry as their common enemy on account of the close ties of blood that bound the pair to one another. With Leicester, Sir Henry lived on far better terms than with his other powerful brother-in-law, Lord Sussex. So strong, indeed, was his attachment to the Dudley interest considered, that it was the constant complaint of the authors of numerous pamphlets circulated by the Jesuits and others throughout England, inveighing against Elizabeth and Leicester, that the latter aimed, like his father, at the advancement of his own kin by unfair means, and that on his climbing to the throne the most important statesman in England would be Sir Henry Sidney. Even Cecil, so we learn from his private papers, feared this.



ROBERT DUDLEY, EARL OF LEICESTER.

*(From an Engraving of the Original Portrait at Hatfield.)*

[Facing p. 32.]



In the early years of Elizabeth's reign, Sir Henry undoubtedly acted as a go-between and mediator between Leicester and De Quadra, the Spanish Ambassador, with a view to obtaining King Philip's tacit consent to a match between the Queen and her favourite. Later on, we find both Sir Henry and Lady Mary engaged in sounding De Quadra<sup>†</sup> as to the propriety of Elizabeth's marrying the Archduke Charles of Austria. According to the Ambassador, Lady Mary on one occasion told him that Elizabeth had revealed in confidence that there had been a plot to murder herself and Leicester, and that she (Elizabeth) was in consequence so frightened that she wished to seek safety in making a popular marriage. Again, on the occasion of Amy Robsart's death, De Quadra had Sir Henry's word that he was sure there had been no foul play, that the unhappy lady had died by accident, and Elizabeth and Leicester were a pair of honest lovers.

Conducted on a more pleasant scale than his negotiations with the envoy of King Philip were Sir Henry's missions to the Scottish Court. His visits to Edinburgh seem to have been both enjoy-

<sup>†</sup> *Vide* Notes : "The Simancas MSS."

able and successful, and his interviews at Holyrood with Mary Stewart seem to have given great satisfaction to both of the rival Queens of the sister countries.

As a young man, Sir Henry was remarkably good-looking.<sup>1</sup> His manners and address were always winning and courteous. Of a naturally mild and merry temperament, he could nevertheless blaze forth into anger when roused. It needed a strong man to govern Ireland, and he was undoubtedly a strong man. Above all things a lover of order, he was minute and regular in his business transactions, and in this particular it is to his credit that he ordered the records of Ireland, which he found scattered about and placed under no proper care, to be properly catalogued, stored, and housed in a special room designed for the purpose in Dublin Castle. In all the weighty pecuniary matters pertaining to his high offices he was the soul of honour. Literary and scientific pursuits relieved his idle hours, whilst he inherited from his father a rare interest in the Navy and its affairs. As kind and generous to his secretaries

<sup>1</sup> In Holinshed he is quaintly called the "onelic od man and paragon of the Court."

and officers as to his own family, he was adored by all the members of his household.

Sent to govern Ireland at a period of a chaotic anarchy, he had first to conquer it, and none of his predecessors or successors occupying the Vice-royalty have acquitted themselves with more success. The arduous nature of the task before him ruined his constitution and caused him to die in harness, prematurely old. The expenses and liberality of his government ruined his patrimony. In spite therefore of all his glories, he died a disappointed and impoverished man.

If, in dealing with the Irish insurgents, he had frequently to resort to martial law, it must be remembered that these victims were brigands and murderers, who in every sense of the word were criminals worthy of death. Such executions only occurred when they were absolutely necessary. His record was not stained by the butcheries, the horrible cruelties, the wholesale slaughter of innocent persons in cold blood that marked the career of Cromwell in Southern Ireland. His secretary, Molyneux, wrote the truth when he recorded that at his death "there was great moan and lamentation, especially by those under

his government, as having lost that special nobleman whom for courtesy they loved, for justice amongst them they highly honoured, and for many other and rare gifts and singular virtues they in his lifetime greatly esteemed, and at his death marvellously bemoaned !”

Ample materials for framing a biography of Sir Henry are comprised in his voluminous correspondence, which constitutes not only an account of the writer's deeds, but also an excellent history of quite a quarter of a century of Elizabeth's reign. In the pages of his letters we discern the true character of the man, the story of his toils, the fulness of his integrity and valour. We perceive how shabbily he was treated <sup>†</sup> and how patiently he suffered. We recognise in him one of the greatest and noblest of Englishmen that ever devoted himself to the public service. Perhaps the best and most concise phrase that can be quoted in summing up both the story of his career and the tendencies of his inclinations is his own

<sup>†</sup> As an instance of this, a sentence in one of his letters to Walsingham bears conclusive testimony: “Three times,” says he, “has her Majesty sent me to Ireland; I returned from each of them three thousand pounds worse than I went !”



family motto, to which he was never tired of alluding as peculiarly appropriate to his circumstances, namely—

“*Quo fata vocant,*”

for if ever a life was voluntarily resigned to the buffets and the commands of Fate, it was that of Sir Henry Sidney.

## CHAPTER III

FRANCES SIDNEY, COUNTESS OF SUSSEX

(153 -1589)

FRANCES, the wife of that Earl of Sussex whom Sir Walter Scott has described in such high terms in his romance of "Kenilworth," was the fourth and youngest daughter of Sir William Sidney, by his wife Anne, daughter of Sir Hugh Pagenham and widow of Thomas Fitz William, brother to the Earl of Southampton.

She was sister to Sir Henry Sidney, whose post as Lord Deputy of Ireland was obtained for him at the instance of her husband, who had himself previously governed the "distressful country." The wife of one of the most powerful, wealthy, and virtuous noblemen of Elizabeth's Court, Frances was able to exert her powerful influence towards forwarding the fortunes of her brother and

his family, but it was the ultimate disposal of her matrimonial inheritance after her death that was to render her name so famous in history in general, and in the annals of Cambridge University in particular.

Married to Thomas Radcliffe, Earl of Sussex, April 26, 1555, she became a widow in March, 1583, after a prosperous and happy wedded life extending over a space of nearly eight and twenty years. Her widowhood was of no long endurance, for she soon followed her husband to the tomb, and was interred in St. Paul's Chapel, Westminster Abbey, in April, 1589, having died at Bermondsey on the 9th of the previous month.

Throughout her wedded life and widowhood, Lady Sussex had been noted for her boundless charities, her manifold kindly gifts to the poor, and her support of the new-born Anglican Church, of whose communion she was ever a staunch and devoted member. The Earl having no children either by her or his first wife, she inherited from him very considerable property and wealth, distributed at her decease in a most generous and sensible manner.

It is to the will of the benevolent Countess that

the University of Cambridge owes the institution and foundation of that famous College which bears her maiden name, coupled with the title of herself and her husband.

By this will she bequeathed the sum of £5,000 (equivalent to some £30,000 of our money), as well as other additional property, for the foundation and endowment at Cambridge of a College to be christened the "Lady Frances Sidney-Sussex." Should this sum and the attendant property prove insufficient for the purpose of erecting such a College, it was to be expended instead in adorning, enriching, and enlarging Clare Hall, on condition that this institution should, out of grateful remembrance, be known in future as the "Clare and Lady Frances Sidney-Sussex College." But the funds, luckily, were deemed sufficient. The foundation of the new College took place in 1596, and it was formally opened on its completion, some three years later.<sup>1</sup> By her directions, the College was to provide room for a master, ten fellows, and twenty scholars, but her executors, the funds being barely ample for this, were compelled to reduce the

<sup>1</sup> The first famous man to matriculate at Sidney was Oliver Cromwell, who came up into residence in 1616.

number of the scholars. Subsequent endowments, it need scarcely be said, have greatly increased the original total.

This magnificent memorial was not the only public donation of the Countess. In addition to leaving the sum of £100 (equivalent to some £600 of our money) for division amongst "poor and godly" London preachers, she devised the sum of £20 to the Abbey Church of Westminster for the purpose of arranging for two divinity lectures to be delivered by competent divines perpetually in the church during each available week. For the decoration of her husband's tomb, in which she also sleeps, she devised a considerable sum, and it remains one of the finest, as well as one of the most interesting sepulchres on view within the walls of the great Abbey.

Her last testament was remarkable too for the magnitude of the legacies to her relatives, amongst whom the name of her nephew, Robert Sidney, is prominent.

## CHAPTER IV

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

(1554-86.)

### I.

AT Penshurst, on Friday morning, the 30th of November, 1554, in a finely wainscoted room looking out on to the park, was ushered into the world Philip, the eldest son and heir of his parents, Sir Henry and Lady Mary Sidney. He was christened Philip, after the King-Consort, who also stood godfather to him, the other sponsors being the Earl of Bedford and the Duchess of Northumberland. His birth afforded one of those few instances of a really great man proving so fortunate as to be the father of a really great son. The son's greatness in this case was, however, to endure for all too short a



SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

*(From an Engraving of the Miniature by Isaac Oliver at Windsor Castle.)*

[Facing p. 42.]





span. Like Alexander among the ancients, like Keats, Shelley, and General Wolfe among the moderns, he was destined to die before reaching the prime of life, before obtaining a chance of presenting to the sight of an admiring audience the full measure of his genius. It seems, in fact, extraordinary that he should have achieved all he did in the short time open to him. His was a career of golden youth. "Those whom the gods love die young!"

No illustrious Englishman has bequeathed to his posterity a reputation more unblemished than Sir Philip. In honouring him, the "Bayard of Britain," the stainless knight "*sans peur et sans reproche*," "*lumen familiæ suæ*," the "cherished child of the Muses," the "type of chivalry in the Elizabethan age," our leading writers of the history of his period, so often at variance, are in his case at one. If his portrait has on the whole been too handsomely depicted, it hangs, at least, represented in the most generous and glowing of colours. If his character has been too highly extolled, his virtues too much extolled, his faults almost entirely condoned, it "has been the mistake of his several enthusiastic biographers." Except

indeed in the case of some original charges of immorality against Sir Philip on account of his love for "Stella," his biographers have erred in adopting a policy of "painting the lily." They have essayed to describe a man who, by the vigour of their eulogies, has been converted into a kind of sinless legendary hero. They have erred, in my humble opinion, by not describing the man as he truly was. The truest biography is that which records with blameless impartiality the good and the evil together. The one without the other is valueless. For instance, no more pleasantly written or interesting biography exists in our language than that of Lord Nelson by Southey; but yet is it the "real" Nelson? Philip Sidney was only human, very human, after all. His popularity should have nothing to fear from this. He was hot-tempered and passionate<sup>1</sup> to an excess, when roused; he was extravagant, he was impatient of control. These were his worst faults. Are they so serious that his principal biographers should have shirked mentioning them?

In spite of these faults, he was, to quote his

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Notes: "Sir Philip and Edmund Molyneux."

greatest biographer, admirer, and friend, Fulke Greville, "a true model of worth; a man fit for conquest, plantation, or reformation, or what action soever is the greatest and hardest amongst men; withal, such a lover of mankind and goodness that whosoever had any real parts in him found comfort, participation, and protection to the uttermost of his power; like Zephyrus, giving life where he blew. The Universities abroad and at home accounted him a very Mæcenas of learning, dedicated their books to him, and communicated every invention or improvement of knowledge to him. Soldiers honoured him, and were so honoured by him, as no man thought he marched under the true banner of Mars that had not obtained Sir Philip Sidney's approbation. Men of affairs in most parts of Christendom entertained correspondence with him. . . . His heart and capacity were so large that there was not a cunning painter, a skilful engineer, an excellent musician, or any other artificer of extraordinary fame, that made not himself known to this famous spirit, and found him his true friend without hire and the common *rendezvous* of worth in his time.

Besides, the ingenuity of his nature did spread itself so freely abroad as who lives that can say he ever did him any harm? . . . His chief friends being not wife, children, and himself, but above all things, the honour of his Maker, and the service of his prince and country."

"Sidney," says Camden, "shall live to all posterity, for as the Greek poet has it, virtue's beyond the reach of fate!"

"Sidney," sings Shelley,

"As he fought  
And as he fell, and as he lived and loved,  
Sublimely mild, a spirit without spot";

and Spenser, grateful for many kindnesses, amongst numerous other eulogies—

"Remembrance of that most heroic spirit . . .

. . . . .  
Who first my Muse did lift out of the floor,  
To sing his sweet delights in lowly lays."

But the Sidney of the following pages is not represented as the spotless hero of the poets, but as a soldier, scholar, courtier, poet, and man of the world. The scope of the present work forbids, unfortunately, telling in full detail the

whole story of his short but splendid life. It takes rather the form of a brief critical essay, but tends to mention several interesting facts hitherto omitted by his biographers, some of whose most glaring errors it is humbly intended to correct.

## II.

The first interesting fact in connection with the boyhood of Philip is the payment to him, at the early age of some ten years, of the tithes due from the living of Whitford, in Flintshire, on account of the rector having been deposed for his Catholic observances. The youthful Philip was thus informed that the sum of fifty-six pounds per annum was being put by for him by his father against his reaching manhood. Simple a matter as this is to read, it has been completely misinterpreted by some writers, who, being presumably ignorant of the laws against the Catholics current in those times, have in consequence imagined that Philip was intended for the profession of a clergyman: an utterly trivial and baseless deduction. About the period of his

possession of the living, Philip was sent to Shrewsbury School, where he remained four years, winning the utmost distinction for his scholarship, and laying the foundations of his life-long friendship with his fellow pupil, Fulke Greville. He seems, during his stay at Shrewsbury, to have been of a very delicate constitution; and on his accompanying Fulke Greville to stay at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1568, we find Archbishop Parker writing expressly to permit his eating meat during Lent.

Whilst at Oxford, it was proposed to marry him to the eldest daughter of the statesman, Cecil, which would have been, from a worldly and political point of view, an excellent alliance for both the parties concerned. But, after prolonged negotiations, it was broken off, and Anne Cecil was betrothed to Philip's future deadly enemy, the Earl of Oxford.

In the spring of 1572 Philip left England, the better to finish his education, for a tour on the Continent, first visiting Paris, whither he carried letters of introduction to our Ambassador, Sir Francis Walsingham, by whom he was introduced to the French King and the principal nobility and

gentry of the Court. So pleased was Charles IX. with the handsome young Englishman that he gave him a title, and appointed him a gentleman of his bed-chamber. But the pleasures of "Baron Sidenay's" visit to Paris were doomed to be cut short by the terrible massacre of St. Bartholemew's Eve. After which he left Paris—disgusted beyond measure with the cruelties he had seen practised from the windows of Walsingham's house, with the cries of the slaughtered Huguenots still ringing in his ears, and his hatred of the Papacy still further augmented—for Frankfort. It was here that he first met his friend, tutor, and counsellor, Hubert Languet, who awoke in him the desire to become famous as a writer, a philosopher, and poet. From Frankfort he journeyed into Italy, visiting the chief cities in the north, and becoming acquainted with those glorious painters, Tintoretto and Paul Veronese, by whom his portrait was painted, and forwarded as a gift to Languet. From Italy he visited Vienna, and travelled through Austria to the borders of Poland. In 1575 he returned to England, and attached himself to the Court, where he was welcomed and made much of by the Queen. In

the following year he saw for the first time some active service, fighting under his father in Ireland against the insurgent Irish. But he was soon to travel once more far afield; and in 1577, was despatched on a special embassy to the Emperor Rudolph of Austria, with secret instructions to do all he could whilst abroad to strengthen the cause of the Protestants against the dominion of the Papacy and Spain. During part of this second tour he was accompanied by Languet, whilst his chief secretary was Fulke Greville. Returning home, *viâ* Holland, he made the acquaintance of that excellent prince, William of Orange, who shortly afterwards was to come to such an untimely end. Of Philip's charge of his mission, William wrote, "There hath not been any gentleman, I am sure, these many years that hath gone through so honourable a charge with as great commendations as he!" To Elizabeth, the Prince also wrote, congratulating her on the wisdom and prudence of her envoy. In 1578 Languet visited Philip in England, and stayed a few days at Penshurst. Soon after the scholar's departure the storm burst which was to land him, like his father, in a quarrel with the Queen.



Whilst playing tennis at Whitehall, one morning in September, 1579, Philip was openly insulted by Lord Oxford, a man of bad life and morals, of cowardly and treacherous disposition, a cruel husband, a libertine, in whom pride of race amounted to insufferable arrogance in his bearing to both men and women of all ranks and grades. In Philip he met a redoubtable antagonist, who quickly gave him the lie in answer to his insolence, and finally challenged him to a duel. This the craven Earl managed to evade, vainly endeavouring instead to have his opponent assassinated in bed. On the matter reaching the ever-open ears of the Queen, she directed the "jewel of her dominions," as she called Philip, to humbly apologise; but this he declined. In a few months more, the royal anger was further stirred by his writing a patriotic but intensely passionate and anti-papal letter to Elizabeth, asking—in fact, almost commanding—her not to enter into her proposed marriage with the Duke of Anjou. Elizabeth replied by banishing the audacious author from Court. It is to this banishment that we probably owe that magnificent romance, the "Arcadia."

Seeking for consolation during his disgrace at his sister's, Lady Pembroke's house, of Wilton, Philip whiled away his time in company with his talented companion, herself suffering from the neglects of a too selfish husband, in writing poetry and prose. These efforts, published after his death under the title of the "Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia," were "done," he says, "in loose sheets of paper, most of it in my sister's presence, the rest by sheets sent to her as fast as they were wrote." These summer months of the year 1580 must have formed the happiest period in the lives of both brother and sister. By the beginning of the next year the outspoken poet was forgiven, and returned to bask in the sunshine of the royal favour. In February, 1582, he had the satisfaction of escorting the discomfited Anjou out of England as far as Antwerp, where good old Hubert Languet had brought his studious and honourable career to a close some little time previous. On his return to England Philip was knighted by the Queen, and married to Frances, daughter and heiress of his patron, Sir Francis Walsingham, now Secretary of State. In this marriage there was unhappily but little sincere love on either side.

## III.

In continuing this rough *résumé* of Sir Philip's public life we can now skip over the intervening days until the despatch of the English expedition to the Netherlands carrying aid to the Dutch Protestants under the Earl of Leicester, whose nephew was nominated at his departure Governor of Flushing, a post that, as will be seen later on, was to remain in his family for more than a quarter of a century from the date of this appointment.

Soon after landing at Flushing (November, 1585), Sir Philip perceived instances of how truly his father, Sir Henry, had estimated Elizabeth's character when he had complained of her treachery, her perfidy, her ingratitude, and, above all, her niggardly parsimony. Elizabeth played the same game with the son that she had already done with the father. She first of all promised to send her soldiers adequate ammunition and supplies, and then deliberately broke her promise. She complained of her army's inactivity one minute, only to chide its forwardness and eagerness for action the next. Leicester, who has been very much and

probably too much blamed by historians for his conduct of the campaign, was completely hampered by the frivolous and contradictory instructions to hand from his royal mistress. A Marlborough or a Wellington could have accomplished nothing decisive with an army ill-manned, ill-fed, ill-paid, ill-supplied with arms and horses, and outnumbered by their Spanish adversaries, the finest regular troops then in Europe. The sole victory that greeted the expedition was Sir Philip's nocturnal capture of Axel, which he accomplished by a night attack planned and executed by him with consummate daring and strategy in July, 1586. But it was, alas, the beginning of the end. The hero, disheartened at the successive news of both his father's and his mother's death, by dire pecuniary straits, by the Queen's unjust strictures, was to meet his mortal wound on the fatal field of Zutphen in September.

This battle of Zutphen, which deserves to be better remembered, must rank as one of the most gallant actions ever encountered by the warriors of England. In many respects its details invite comparison with the charge of our light cavalry at Balaclava. It was one of those battles in which

the vanquished carried off all the honours save that of absolute success. Sir Philip's kindred was well represented thereat, since his uncle commanded the English army, his brothers, Robert and Thomas, fought in it, and his wife was close at hand at Flushing to nurse him when wounded.

The town of Zutphen lay on the river Yssel. Crossing this stream, Leicester commenced to threaten and encompass the town on September 14th. For a week he continued the siege, until news reached him by his spies that a force bearing relief to the besieged was on its way and close at hand. Unfortunately for the English general this information erred in its most important point, namely, in underrating by quite a fifth, the number of the infantry composing the Spanish forces.

Leicester directed some five hundred and fifty men to intercept the Spaniards, whom they were to surprise at dawn, on September 22nd. Sir Philip was not invited to join in this attack, but in company with his brothers, Sir William Perrott (who had served under his father), and Lords Willoughby and Essex, he joined the expedition without leave. It was this brave action that

caused Elizabeth to afterwards angrily remark to a young nobleman attempting a similar freak, "until you are knocked on the head as that foolish fellow, Sidney, was!"

The early morning of the 22nd was enveloped in mist, dense and damp. Stealthily the little band of English crept along towards their quarry, whose advance they gradually detected by the noise of their provision waggons and the tramp of the soldiers on the march. But in striving to surprise the Dons they had in reality only surprised themselves. The rays of the rising sun gradually pierced through the fog and disclosed to their horror not a few hundred of their enemies, but an army of nearly three thousand men, comprising the flower of the chivalry of Spain. They had their choice of attacking or retreating. They were not long in deciding, and dashed upon the foe.

In the desperate hand-to-hand fighting that followed Sir Philip was handicapped by the fact that he had lent, with incomparable kindness, a portion of his armour to a friend (Sir W. Pelham). He was struck by a bullet below the knee in the second charge, just where this armour should have

protected him. He had already had a horse killed under him. Weary with his exertions, with his wound bleeding copiously, he rode slowly away to the camp, more than a mile distant, suffering agonies of pain. Arrived there, almost mad with thirst, he called eagerly for water, and they brought him a cup full of the much desired liquid. But, as he was about to raise it to his lips, his glance was attracted by a wounded soldier lying on the ground looking wistfully at it. He thereupon at once handed it untasted to his comrade-in-arms, uttering the henceforth immortal phrase—

“Thy necessity is still greater than mine !”

He was not long in learning that his wound was likely to prove mortal. The surgeons at hand failed to master its progress. The surgeons of to-day would have cured it in a fortnight. Undaunted by the mournful news of his approaching death, he awaited the last dread summons with unconquerable composure. No man or woman in the history of the world has ever awaited it with more composure, or lain upon a more beautiful

couch of sickness awaiting with heroic courage the coming of the end.

“Oh, Philip!” cried Leicester, “I am truly grieved to see thee in such a state!”

“My Lord, this have I done for your honour, and to do her Majesty some service!”

The wounded knight was conveyed in his uncle's barge down the river to Arnheim, where his wife, then in delicate health, hurried to meet him. His brothers speedily followed her. Bravely and calmly he lay on his bed of pain, expecting the inevitable. It was hard for him to die in the prime of early manhood, with everything in his possession that can make life happy. In spite of his bravery, in spite of the courage with which he bade farewell to terrestrial joys, there was one thing troubling him—the thought that he would never again see that fair face he had loved and worshipped with an ardour such as only the most ardent of men love a woman. He must die, he knew, surrounded by dear friends and relatives, but untended by and without the presence of his beloved “Stella.”

At the deathbed at Arnheim the eyes of all England were anxiously directed. Elizabeth sent



a special envoy to bring the latest bulletin. On September 30th the dying man sent for his friend and spiritual adviser, Gifford, who lost no time in answering his call. But the sickness of the body could not overpower the brightness of the mind. He wrote out his will. He even composed a ballad called, "La Cuisse Rompue!" His last request of importance was to send for the famous German doctor, Wier. "Mi Wieri!" he wrote pathetically. "Veni, veni. De vita periclitor, et te cupio. Nec vivus, nec mortuus, ero ingratus. Plura non possum, sed obnixè oro ut festines. Vale. Tuus Ph. Sidneius."

But the physician started too late. All was over when he arrived.

His friends took their last leave of him on October 17th. "Love my memory," he gasped to his weeping brothers. "Cherish my friends. In me behold the end of this world with all its vanities!" It was with difficulty that Robert Sidney could be torn from him. In after years it was Robert's comfort to reflect that he had amply fulfilled the trust reposed in him, and by his steadfastness to duty he succeeded in raising the fortunes of his family to the zenith of its fame.

A few minutes before he died, Gifford whispered in his ear—

“Sir, if you can hear what I say, and if you still have your inward joy and consolation in God, hold up your hand!”

At this the dying hero, to the astonishment of all, raised both hands high up in the air with incredible firmness, and then let them sink gently on his breast.

Some few hours previously he had assured Gifford—

“I would not exchange my joy for the Empire of the World!”

#### IV.

There was but one opinion current in England at the receipt of the news of Sir Philip's death, namely, that the greatest Englishman of the reign was dead. It was, therefore, determined to bestow on his remains one of the most costly funerals ever bestowed on a private gentleman. The States-General offered in vain to bury him in their own country under a tomb that should from its costliness excite the wonder and admiration of the civilised world. The offer was refused and the

body transported to England in a pinnace belonging to the Sidneys, called the *Black Prince*.

The public funeral did not take place till Thursday, February 16, 1587, at Old St. Paul's. In the procession to the most splendid church that has ever been raised in England walked no less than seven hundred mourners. The streets were thronged with silent crowds. By Elizabeth's direction, Court mourning had been prescribed upon the nation. Among those that followed in the train were representatives from the Embassies in London, legates from the States-General, Sir Francis Drake, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen in their robes, Sir Francis Walsingham, and the Lords Huntingdon, Pembroke, Leicester, Essex, and Willoughby. Robert Sidney was chief mourner. The pall-bearers were Sir Edward Dyer, Sir Thomas Dudley, Sir Edward Wooton, and Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke. Among the relations of the dead man, present as standard-bearers, were his brother Thomas and his cousins, Henry and William Sidney.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Thomas Lant's celebrated engraving, specially drawn for the occasion. The best copy now extant is in the King's Library at the British Museum.

The grave, in which his father-in-law was afterwards buried, was dug beneath the Lady Chapel behind the High Altar. It perished in common with the rest of the mighty fabric in the Great Fire of 1666.

Sir Philip's widow, a somewhat unworthy daughter of one great man and unworthy wife of another, married in 1590 Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, Elizabeth's favourite, beheaded in 1601. After her second husband's death, she tried her luck once more by marrying the Earl of Clanricarde. To Sir Philip she bore one child,<sup>1</sup> a daughter, Frances,<sup>2</sup> who married Roger Manners, Earl of Rutland. She died without issue in 1612. Thus there have existed since that date no direct descendant or descendants of Sir Philip Sidney.

## V.

Having now finished a rough draft of the chief events in Sir Philip's public life, let us next turn our attention to the more important details of his character and private career. In this connection

<sup>1</sup> The child born soon after Sir Philip's death was still-born.

<sup>2</sup> To whom Queen Elizabeth stood sponsor in person.

the most striking episode that calls for attention is his much-maligned and ill-represented relations with the "Stella" of his poems, the "Stella," already mentioned above, to whom he was the love-sick "Astrophel." Who was "Stella"?

"Stella" was Penelope, daughter of Walter Devereux, Earl of Essex. She became the wife, in 1581, of Robert, Lord Rich. By him she was treated with cold neglect. To him she proved an unfaithful wife. In 1605, divorced from her husband, she married a lover, the Earl of Devonshire, who had already had by her illegitimate children. She died in 1607. Curiously enough, her brother, Essex, married the widow of her admirer, Philip Sidney, and her strenuous exertions to save the fallen favourite from the block evoked general approbation.

Of great beauty and some literary talent, Sir Philip first met her when she was a girl of fourteen at Chartley Castle. His attachment started with their first interview and lasted until death.

"To her he vowed the service of his days ;  
On her he spent the riches of his wit,  
To her he made hymns of immortal praise,  
Of only her he sang, he thought, he writ."

(*Spenser.*)

Why the pair were never married remains a mystery, considering that they were affianced to one another, and both Sir Henry Sidney and Lord Essex were exceeding eager for the match. The death of Lady Penelope's father seems to have been the chief reason for the broken engagement. Penelope was married to Lord Rich, almost by force, and certainly against her will. Sir Philip, well-nigh frenzied with rage and despair, determined, nevertheless, to consecrate his life and genius to her. She became the heroine of his verses. That she loved him in return can readily be comprehended by the excess of grief she displayed at his decease. Unfortunately, the state of this mutual love has been considerably enlarged upon by various authors who have, without a shadow of proof, declared that the pair lived on intimate terms after their respective marriages. If this had been so, would Sir Philip have had the audacity to parade his guilt by constantly furnishing society with sonnets on his mistress? Everything he wrote about her tends to show that his was a restrained, unsatisfied passion. After his own marriage, he appears only to have met her on very rare occasions. The principal authority for

these odious charges was led into (and has since confessed) his error chiefly by mistaking a series of dates. Sir Philip's affection for "Stella" forms the loveliest episode in his chivalrous and romantic life. Considering the brutal manner in which Lord Rich treated her, her conduct subsequent to Sir Philip's death, dishonourable though it was, must not be judged too harshly, when the laxity of the age and the acuteness of her sufferings are taken into bare consideration.

## VI.

As a poet, though his "Arcadia" is ill-suited to our modern taste, and now but little read, Sir Philip reigned, with the exception of Dryden, and perhaps of Spenser, as the most popular English bard during the seventeenth century. Until the beginning of the reign of James I. his poems were not published in a popular form, the "Arcadia" with the others not being put into print till after his death, but most of his sonnets were widely circulated in manuscript during his lifetime. His literary executrix was his sister, Lady Pembroke, who nobly fulfilled the trust imposed upon her.

To Sir Philip we owe the first successful stand made against the tedious euphuisms that marred the literature of the time. According to Drayton, he

“Thoroughly paced our language, as to show  
The plenteous English hand in hand might go  
With Greek and Latin, and did first reduce  
Our tongue from Lyly’s writing then in use.”

With regard to his choice of subject for his *chef d’œuvre*, the “Arcadia,” it is interesting to note that, like Milton, he was within an ace of forestalling Tennyson by selecting the chivalrous adventures of King Arthur and his “Table Round” for the theme of his discourse.

Next in importance to the “Arcadia” among the poet’s efforts rank his sonnets, still widely read, and of late years given to the world in a more convenient and popular shape. The heroine of these is “Stella,” the hero “Astrophel.” His other works include the “Defence of Poesie,” a partial translation of the Psalms, and a spirited reply to the anonymous attack on Leicester made in a book commonly called “Leicester’s Commonwealth.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Notes : “Leicester’s Commonwealth.”



As the author of "Arcadia," Sir Philip was the founder of a school. "Imitation, the sincerest form of flattery," speedily brought into the field numerous copyists of his style. Versions of the "Arcadia" were published in France and Germany, translated into the languages of those countries, early in the reign of James I. Shakespeare undoubtedly studied it with avidity, as the pages of "King Lear," "Love's Labour Lost," the "Tempest," and the "Midsummer Night's Dream," bear most ample witness. Indeed, the Bard of Avon, in more than one instance, studied certain passages with considerable profit to himself.

To reap the full benefit of Sir Philip's genius, displayed both in poetry and prose, we have but to refer to the volumes containing its fruits; but as no memoir of him would be complete without some evidence of his labours rendered in black and white, I subjoin some of the most striking extracts, first in poetry, afterwards in prose, viz :

SLEEP ("ASTROPHEL AND STELLA").

"Come, Sleep ! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,  
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,  
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,  
Th' indifferent judge between the high and low."

## DESIRE ("ASTROPHEL AND STELLA").

"Thou blind man's mark, thou fool's self-chosen snare,  
 Fond fancy's scum, and dregs of scattered thought :  
 Band of all evils ; cradle of causeless care ;  
 Thou web of will, whose end is never wrought :  
 Desire ! Desire ! I have too dearly bought,  
 With price of mangled mind, thy worthless ware ;  
 Too long, too long, asleep thou hast me brought,  
 Who shouldst my mind to high things prepare !"

## THE DEATH OF LOVE.

"Ring out your bells, let mourning shows be spread ;  
 For Love is dead :  
     All love is dead, infected  
 With plague of deep disdain :  
     Worth, as naught worth, rejected,  
 And faith fair scorn doth gain.  
     From so ungrateful fancy,  
     From such a female frenzy,  
     From them that use men thus,  
     Good Lord, deliver us !  
 Weep, neighbours, do you not hear it said  
 That Love is dead ?  
     His death-bed, peacock's folly ;  
 His winding-sheet is shame ;  
     His will, false-seeming holy ;  
 His sole executor, blame.  
     From so ungrateful fancy,  
     From such a female frenzy,  
     From them that use men thus,  
     Good Lord, deliver us !"

## TO THE MOON ("ASTROPHEL AND STELLA").

"With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies ;  
 How silently, and with how wan a face !  
 What, may it be that even in heavenly place  
 That busy archer his sharp arrows tries !  
 Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes  
 Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case,  
 I read it in thy looks ; thy languisht grace,  
 To me, that feel the like, thy state decries.  
 Then, e'en of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,  
 Is constant love deemed there but want of wit ?  
 Are beauties there as proud as here they be ?  
 Do they alone love to be loved, and yet  
 These lovers scorn whom that love doth possess ?  
 Do they call virtue there ungratefulness ? "

## "STELLA."

"Stella, the only planet of my light,  
 Light of my life, and life of my desire,  
 Chief good whereto my hope only doth aspire,  
 World of my wealth, and heaven of my delight."

## RENDERING OF PSALM XXIII.

"The Lord, the Lord my Shepherd is,  
 And so can never I  
 Taste misery.  
 He rests me in green pastures His :  
 By waters still and sweet  
 He guides my feet.  
 He me revives ; leads me the way  
 Which righteousness doth take,  
 For His name's sake.  
 Yea, though I should through valley stray,  
 Of death's dark shade, I will  
 No whit fear ill.

For Thou, dear Lord, Thou me besett'st :  
 Thy rod and Thy staff be  
 To comfort me.

Before me Thou a table sett'st,  
 Even when foes' envious eye  
 Doth it espy.

Thou oil'st my head ; Thou fill'st my cup ;  
 Nay more, Thou endless good,  
 Shalt give me food.

To Thee, I say, ascended up,  
 Where Thou, the Lord of all,  
 Dost hold Thy hall." †

A SATIRE ON LORD RICH ("ASTROPHEL AND STELLA").

"Towards Aurora's Court a nymph doth dwell,  
 Rich in all beauties which man's eyes can see.  
 Beauties so far from reach in words that we  
 Abuse her praise, saying she doth excel ;  
 Rich in the treasure of deserved renown ;  
 Rich in the riches of a royal heart ;  
 Rich in those gifts which give the eternal crown ;  
 Who though most rich in thee and every part  
 Which makes the patents of true worldly bliss,  
 Hath no misfortune but that ' Rich ' she is !"

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† It is hardly a compliment to the reader's common sense to ask him to register his opinion that the man who could write in such a deeply Christian strain was a true believer ! Yet, will it be believed, Dr. Warton, in a note to one of Pope's lines, calls Sir Philip an atheist, merely because he was acquainted with Giordano Bruno ? The value of this criticism may be estimated by the fact of the critic ascribing the date of this friendship with Bruno in London to the year 1587 ; namely, a year after Sir Philip's death !

## FROM "ARCADIA."

"My true love hath my heart, and I have his,  
 By just exchange one for the other given ;  
 I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss ;  
 There never was a bargain better driven ;  
 His heart in me keeps me and him in one ;  
 My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides ;  
 He loves my heart, for once it was his own ;  
 I cherish his, because in me it bides."

## FROM "ARCADIA."

"The song I sang old Languet had me taught—  
 Languet, the shepherd, best swift Ister knew  
 For clerkly rede, and hating what is naught,  
 For faithful heart, clean hand, and mouth as true,  
 With his sweet skill my skill-less youth he drew  
 To have a feeling taste of Him that sits  
 Beyond the heavens, far more beyond our wits.  
 . . . . .  
 He liked me, but pitied lustful youth :  
 His good strong staff my slippery years upbore,  
 He still hoped well because I lovèd truth."

"An Englishman that is Italianate †  
 Doth lightly prove a devil incarnate !"

(*Translation.*)

"Vix ea nostra voco," was his adopted motto, which he added to his arms.

"If the Queen (Elizabeth) pay not her soldiers, she must lose her garrisons !"

(*Letter to Walsingham.*)

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† This would convey an excellent description of the character of Thomas Cromwell, the too faithful minister to Henry VIII !

## KALENDER'S HOUSE ("ARCADIA").

"The house itself was built of fair and strong stone, not affecting so much any extraordinary kind of fineness as an honourable representing of a firm stateliness; the lights, doors, and stairs rather directed to the use of the guests than to the eye of the artificer, and yet, as the one chiefly heeded, so the other not neglected; each place handsome without curiosity, and homely without loathsomeness; not so dainty as not to be trod on, nor yet slubbered up with good fellowship; all more lasting than beautiful, but that the consideration of the exceeding lastiness made the eye believe that it was exceeding beautiful; the servants not so many in number as cleanly in apparel and serviceable in behaviour, testifying even in their countenances that their master took as well care to served as of them who did serve."—(*Intended probably as a veiled description of either Penshurst, or Willon, or both.*)

"If die we must, let us thank death he hath not divided so true an union."

"The heavenly powers are to be revered, and not searched into; and their mercies rather by prayers to be sought, than their hidden counsels by curiosity."

"Certain it is, the God which is God of Nature, doth never teach unnaturalness!"

"Then will be the time to die nobly, when you cannot live nobly."

"While there is hope left, let not the weakness of sorrow make the strength of it languish: take comfort, and good success will follow."

"The cunningest pilot is he who most dreads the rocks."

"Obscurely born, he had found out unblushing pedigrees."

Philipps Sidneius

(1569.)

Your honors humble  
at commandment

Philip Sidney

(1581.)

Your Lps humble  
at commandment  
Ph Sidney

(1585.)

SPECIMENS OF SIR PHILIP SIDNEY'S HANDWRITING.

(From the Originals.)





“I had, this night, a trouble in my mind ; for, searching myself, methought I had not a full and sure hold of Christ. After I had continued in this perplexity a while, how strangely God did deliver me ! for it was a strange delivery which I had. There came to my remembrance a vanity in which I delighted, whereof I had not rid myself. I rid myself of it, and presently my joy and comfort returned.”

*(Told on his death-bed.)*

“They are never alone, said I, that are accompanied with noble thoughts.”

“With a tale, forsooth, the poet cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney-corner ; and pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue.”

“I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas but that I found my heart stirred as with the sound of a trumpet.”

“Who shoots at the midday sun, though he be sure he shall never hit the mark, yet as sure he is he shall shoot higher than who aims but at a bush.”

“There is nothing more terrible to a guilty heart than the eye of a respected friend.”

## VII.

The political opinions of Sir Philip tended towards rather different ambitions than those held by his father. In spite of the fact that he was the godson to King Philip, the benefactor of his family, he never hesitated to declare the proper policy for

the Queen to adopt was to oppose Spain. In the Spanish supremacy, he recognised the chief defence of that detestable tyranny, the temporal power of the Pope, against whose usurpations he was never tired of inveighing. Like Sir Henry and Lady Mary, he would have liked Leicester to have married Elizabeth, but he would not hear of coming to terms with the Spanish Ambassador in order to cement this alliance. Sir Henry, on the other hand, thought it best to inform his old patron of Leicester's ambition, and, if possible, obtain his tacit approval. But Sir Philip would have none of this. He recognised that the chief enemies of English liberty were the Papal Curia and the Spanish King, and gave, therefore, his warmest support towards the schemes of Drake, Hawkins, and Raleigh for attacking the Spanish colonies and robbing them of their wealth. Curiously enough, he was dead against the plan for attacking the Spaniards under Parma in the Netherlands, for he was right in his opinion that England was not strong or wealthy enough to fight the Dons on *terra firma* away from home. Zutphen sadly proved the correctness of his views!

In religion, Sir Philip was a zealous and

Yours  
Ex<sup>cell</sup>

most humble and  
obedient newsw -

P. Sidney

FACSIMILE OF SIR PHILIP SIDNEY'S HANDWRITING (1586).

(From the Original at the British Museum.)

[Facing p. 76.]



devout Christian. Although deriving considerable pecuniary benefit from the forfeiture and sale of property and benefices belonging to the persecuted Catholics, it went much against the grain to receive money thus obtained. "Truly," said he, "I like not their persons, and much worse their religion ; but I think my fortune very hard that my fortune must be built on other men's punishments." Like most of the English gentry of his time, it was the political side of Catholicism that he hated more than the religious.<sup>1</sup> He saw, as every patriotic Englishman has always seen, that the temporal power of the Pope meant the destruction of civil liberty. As a student of history he knew how cruel and terrible were the exactions which Rome had in the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries inflicted upon England, and he was firmly resolved to do all he could to prevent his beloved country again becoming priest-ridden. Against the Society of Jesus he was particularly bitter, because he perceived that its representatives were the chief and most dangerous advocates of Temporal Power. The Jesuit Parsons he denounced as a scoundrel and traitor of the deepest

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Notes : " Sir Philip and the Church of Rome."

dye, and in this respect his opinions were not merely those of an ardent Protestant. They were, on the contrary, also maintained by many of the Catholics themselves. The old English priests who had said Mass under Mary, under her father, and who still contrived to say it in secret under the roof of some hospitable manor-house or other belonging to a member of the ancient faith, detested the policy and practices of the disciples of Parsons. Even the Benedictines, the missionaries of Europe, almost the oldest and the most learned order in the Catholic Church, smarted under the insults and the wrongs which had been imposed on their English mission by the Jesuits. Not content with ousting the Benedictines, the company of Loyola even arrogated to themselves the power of Bishops, and obtained from the Pope the supreme charge of the English mission. Like Sir Philip, the old-fashioned priests quickly saw that when this was done, the cause of Catholicism was doomed indeed. If the Catholics could not submit to this, how could the Protestants be expected to do so? The result was that when the pet scheme of Parsons (the invasion of the Armada) came off, the very men who were

most prominent in upsetting it were the English Catholics themselves.

Sir Philip can fairly lay claim to the title of one of the founders of our Colonial Empire. He not only approved and advised the schemes of Drake, Frobisher, and Raleigh, but, like his father and his brother, aided them with money. He bore no small part in the arrangements which resulted in the foundation of the colony of Virginia. More than once he attempted to cross the Atlantic, but was prevented by the Queen. In 1585, he nearly succeeded in escaping the vigilance of Elizabeth, and was on the point of sailing with Drake. Making an excuse to quit the Court, he journeyed to Plymouth, whence the expedition was to set sail for the West, in company with Fulke Greville. Obtaining a good start of the royal messengers despatched to overtake and bring them back, the two companions would undoubtedly have succeeded in their plan, had it not been for the obstinacy of the commander. For some reason or other, Drake did not wish to enjoy the pleasure of the courtier's company on his voyage, and was determined to sail without him. It may have been that he feared to incur the Queen's wrath, or that he was afraid

Sir Philip was of a rank sufficiently exalted to divide the command with him,<sup>1</sup> or the presence of these new recruits would greatly minimise the share of the spoil which he hoped to win for himself. Probably all these reasons weighed with him. But despite his caution, he was nearly circumvented by Sir Philip, who had the royal couriers waylaid outside Plymouth by some men in his employ, carefully disguised, and robbed of their despatches. Drake, nevertheless, delayed starting on his voyage till further messengers arrived, commanding the truant to return to London, under penalty of treason if he refused, and with the promise of appointment to an important post if he obeyed; he returned accordingly, and was sent instead to Flushing.

The most agreeable incidents in our hero's career were comprised in his relations with men of letters. Owing to the majority of his works not being issued in printed form till after his decease, his reputation as an author was chiefly posthumous. During his lifetime, he was more widely renowned as a friend

<sup>1</sup> That Drake was a jealous and arbitrary captain we have ample proof in his treatment of Doughty.



and patron of authors than an author himself. Those whom he could not help from his own purse he introduced to his uncle, Leicester, who, with all his faults, always showed himself a large-hearted and sympathetic supporter of poetry, science, and the drama. The circle of Sir Philip's literary acquaintance was thus extremely large. He started Spenser on the road to fame. Hubert Languet was his mentor. To him Giordano Bruno dedicated treatises. He was an intimate friend of the celebrated French writer, du Plessis-Mornay. Ben Jonson was his ardent admirer. He was personally acquainted with Beaumont, Fletcher, Gabriel Harvey, Christopher Marlowe, and Francis Bacon. Of his regard for Sir Walter Raleigh we have already told. Shakespeare he patronised in company with Leicester. Sir Francis Walsingham was his father-in-law, the Countess of Pembroke his sister, Fulke Greville<sup>†</sup> his biographer. His portrait was painted by Paul Veronese. When travelling in Italy, he received a warm welcome from Tasso; in Holland, William of Orange testified to his excellent abilities.

<sup>†</sup> Greville, who became Lord Brooke, left special injunctions that the epitaph engraved on his tombstone should include the words "friend to Sir Philip Sidney"!

Of pretty stories and legends relative to Sir Philip's charm of manner, chivalrous nature, and amiable disposition, these are a legion in number. A few are inserted here as an interesting sample.

"My great uncle," gossips Aubrey, "remembered him, and related that when he was writing 'Arcadia,' he was wont to take his table-book out of his pocket and write down his notions as he was hunting on our pleasant plains."

All the fair dames at the Court of Elizabeth were, according to tradition, wont to acclaim him as the most brilliant and engaging of all the gorgeous circle which surrounded the Queen; the dandies to copy his manners and address, so that for many years after his death it was the custom for a lover to greet his "inamorata" in "pure Sir Philip Sidney fashion"!

Notwithstanding the several rebuffs both he and his father received from Elizabeth, he was always amongst the first to present her with a costly present at Christmas or the New Year.

According to Pepys,<sup>1</sup> he was, as late as in the reign of Charles II., revered as a prophet of political events, notably as foretelling the future

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Notes: "Sir Philip's Prophecy."

power and progress achieved by the Dutch Republic.

It is even recorded that so great was the estimation of him abroad that he was offered the crown of the kingdom of Poland, an honour which he declined.

When riding away from Penshurst to Gravesend *en route* for Holland, there to meet his fate at Zutphen, he galloped back before quitting the park because, on looking round to wave a final farewell to his wife and child, he saw tears standing in Lady Sidney's eyes. Scarcely restraining his own grief, he gave her one more fond embrace, and then rejoined his followers.

As an illustration of his truly chivalrous nature, it is noteworthy that he regarded Edward IV. as his favourite of the English sovereigns, because he sacrificed all regal considerations in order to contract a union with the lady of his heart.

Concerning his kindness to Edmund Spenser, it is related the latter called on him without any previous acquaintance, and offered him a stanza of the unfinished and unpublished "Faëry Queen" by way of an introduction. Sir Philip was so charmed with the poetry that, after reading a few

lines and recognising in this unknown author's efforts traces of a sublime genius, he ordered his steward to give him a large sum of money in reward. But, after a few more lines, he was still more pleased and told his steward to double the sum. After again resuming his reading, his delight was further augmented to an extent that caused him to bid the astonished steward treble the sum he had first offered.

There is a skeleton lurking in the recesses of every cupboard. Unhappy pecuniary circumstances framed Sir Philip's skeleton. Naturally extravagant, ill recompensed by Elizabeth for his services, compelled to indulge in all the gaieties of a gay Court, he was nearly always in monetary difficulties. His very funeral service was delayed until Walsingham had almost beggared himself by recompensing a portion of the clamouring creditors against the deceased knight's estate.

In person Sir Philip was tall, and of a fine but somewhat slender figure; his features pale and slightly effeminate; his expression strikingly pensive, his hair auburn. He was of delicate constitution.

Such was Philip Sidney; poet, soldier, courtier,

patriot, statesman, ambassador, philosopher, hero, faithful friend, gentleman, and lover. To his posterity he has bequeathed a legacy of imperishable renown that will for ever cast a soft and tender light upon the glorious history of the Elizabethan age. In the noble words of Swinburne, written after reading the "Arcadia" in the garden of an old English manor-house:—

" If death and not life were the portal  
 That opens on life at the last,  
 If the spirit of Sidney were mortal  
 And the past of it utterly past,  
 Fear stronger than honour was ever,  
 Forgetfulness mightier than fame,  
 Faith knows not if England should never  
 Subside into shame.

. . . . .

" The sunset that sunrise will follow  
 Is less than the dream of a dream ;  
 The starshine on height and on hollow  
 Sheds promise that dawn shall redeem :  
 The night if the daytime would hide it,  
 Shows lovelier, aflame and afar,  
 Thy soul and thy Stella's beside it,  
 A star by a star."

The following list includes the chief events occurring in the public career of Sir Philip, arranged in chronological order:—

1554. Birth.
1564. Goes to Shrewsbury School.
1568. Goes to Christ Church, Oxon.
1572. Goes to France, and is present in Paris during the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.
1573. Visits Germany, Austria, and Italy. Forms the acquaintance of Hubert Languet.
1574. Studies at Venice. Makes acquaintance with Tintoretto and Paul Veronese. Visits Poland and Vienna.
1575. Returns to England. Stays at Kenilworth during Elizabeth's famous visit.
1576. Travels, and sees active military service in Ireland, serving under his father with Raleigh and Gilbert. Subscribes to Frobisher's North-West Passage to the Indies. Proposes to Lady P. Devereux.
1577. Ambassador to Austria. On his return journey home from Prague is introduced to William of Orange at Dordrecht.
1578. At Court.
1579. Languet visits him in London. Opposes the Queen's proposed match with Anjou. Insulted by Lord Oxford. Commences writing the "Defense of Poesy."
1580. Banished from Court. Retires to Wilton. Writes "Arcadia." Translates some of the Psalms.
1581. Restored to the royal favour. M.P. for Kent. Continues the "Arcadia."
1582. Accompanies Anjou to Antwerp.
1583. Knighted. Marries Frances Walsingham.
1584. Visited in London by Giordano Bruno.
1585. Wishes to sail with Sir F. Drake, but prohibited by Elizabeth. Appointed Governor of Flushing.
1586. Engaged on active military service in the Netherlands. Battle of Zutphen. His death.
1587. Buried in St. Paul's, London.

## CHAPTER V

MARY SIDNEY, COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE,  
AUTHORESS

(1561-1621.)

THIS accomplished lady was the third, yet only surviving daughter of Sir Henry and Lady Mary Sidney. It is probable she was called Mary either after her mother or the Queen, who had dealt so leniently with her parents at that dark hour when the failure of the conspiracy concocted by the Dudleys had placed her father's head in jeopardy. As regards the place of her birth, nearly all her critics and biographers are in ignorance, some pronouncing it London, some Ludlow, some Penshurst, whereas it was neither London, Ludlow, nor Penshurst. As regards the date of her birth, the authorities are equally ignorant, for they respectively fix it at various

dates ranging from the year 1550 to 1556. Such dates are really ridiculous when we consider that her parents were not married till the spring of 1551, and had no fewer than five children born to them before the future countess. As a matter of fact, Mary was born at Ticknell, 27th October, 1561.

Her childhood was spent chiefly at Ludlow Castle, in companionship with her favourite brother, Philip, in whose literary tastes she participated from an early age, and long ere leaving her home for Court she evinced sure signs of proving as talented and as virtuous as had been her unfortunate relative, Lady Jane Grey.

The rumour magnifying the measure of her beauty and accomplishments reached the ears of Elizabeth through her uncle, Leicester, when early in her "teens." In 1575 her presence was commanded at Court, and two years later, at the instance of Leicester, she was affianced to Henry Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. That this, from a worldly point of view, was for her a grand marriage in every sense of the word, there can be no doubt, but it is open to question whether from the first she evinced any real affection for her husband.





MARY SIDNEY, COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE.

*(From an Engraving of the Portrail by Mark Gerard in the Penshurst Collection.)*

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But in those days young ladies of rank or property were not usually requested to make their own choice of a partner. All that was arranged by their relations, and often by the sovereign. Both her father and uncle were delighted at her prospects, notwithstanding the fact that Pembroke was a man of somewhat easy morals, and had been twice married already. To provide a suitable dowry for his daughter, Sir Henry Sidney taxed his purse to the utmost, in which he was finally augmented at his own personal petition in the most handsome fashion by Leicester. Her marriage with Pembroke, son and heir of that Earl who had deserted and opposed John Dudley, the Protector, in the hour of his need, may be considered somewhat in the light of a political move, for it was Leicester's policy to become reconciled to the enemies of his house, as it equally was Pembroke's to curry friendship with the favourite whom the Queen "delighted to honour."

The most important period in the life of the Countess claiming attention from her biographer is undoubtedly the year 1580, not only because in this year her eldest son, William, was born at Wilton, but more particularly because during the

spring and summer of this year Sir Philip, banished from Court, lived a life of retirement with her at Wilton, the beautiful home of the Herberts, where, amidst most charming scenery and surroundings, with the sweet companionship of his sister to inspire his genius, he wrote the "Arcadia." These were the golden days in the life of the Countess. She was never again destined to meet such happiness. It is, in consequence, not difficult to realise the extreme grief wherewith she received the news of the fatal fight at Zutphen, and the subsequent death of her heroic brother. No more happy days at Wilton! No more congenial tasks in translating the Psalms, or inspiring the reluctant Muse! All was over! She was never quite the same woman again after Sir Philip's death! Henceforth her main object, and one well worthy of her, was to become his literary executor, whereby she also made herself recognised as the bountiful patroness of deserving poets and authors. Spenser, in gratitude, dubbed her "Urania" in his verses, whilst of her praises from nearly all the other great Elizabethan writers there was no end. Dissatisfied with the first edition of the "Arcadia," not printed until after the death

of its author, she brought out a revised edition of the book herself, even rewriting and correcting some of its stanzas.

In 1599 her homely life, spent chiefly in the care and education of her two sons, both of whom were afterwards destined to succeed in turn to the Earldom of Pembroke, was broken by a State visit paid by Elizabeth to her at Wilton, during one of the last of those resplendent progresses accomplished by the "Virgin Queen." Two years later she lost her husband, whereafter she lived chiefly in London, dying at the ancient palace of Crosby Hall, her house in Bishopsgate Street, September 25th, 1621, aged sixty-six, having thus survived her favourite brother by no less than thirty-five years. She was buried in Salisbury Cathedral.

Her domestic life, certainly subsequent to the birth of her second son, proved none too happy. Neglected by her husband, her proud and intrepid spirit felt severely the slights imposed upon her. Her widowhood was rendered almost equally distressful owing to the extravagant vagaries of her younger son, Philip ; as an instance of which, on one occasion, it is recorded on hearing of his

cowardice displayed in a quarrel with a Scotch gentleman at Croydon races, she tore her hair with rage, and bitterly regretted having named him after an uncle who would never have demeaned himself in so base a manner.

Her literary talents and literary efforts her contemporaries held in the highest esteem. She was the only English authoress of her period of any note. She is in fact, in point of time, the first English authoress of repute. Putting on one side the great services rendered to her brother not only in helping him with his "Arcadia," she succeeded by her revision of that work in correcting and revising many of the passages with such credit as to reveal herself in the light of a real genius. Of the fine metrical translation of the Psalms, undertaken by herself and her brother, she transcribed the major part of the collection.

Her other most notable works are comprised in translations from the French, and in some short original poems.

The fame and talents of the Countess have been perpetuated with a renown that bids fair to prove imperishable on account of the eloquent epitaph composed in her honour, six lines of which have

almost been converted into household words, so popular and oft-quoted have they become.

This panegyric—

“ Underneath this marble hearse  
Lies the subject of all verse ;  
Sidney’s Sister, Pembroke’s Mother.  
Death ! ere thou hast slain another  
Wise and fair and good as she  
Time shall throw a dart at thee ”—

has been generally ascribed to Ben Jonson, and has been and is quoted frequently by persons who have probably never read a line of the rest of his works, such is its intense popularity. A careful examination into the origin of the authorship, nevertheless, casts the gravest possible doubts as to whether Jonson ever wrote a word of the epitaph, the evidence in favour of his authorship being of the scantiest possible description ; whereas, on the other hand, there exists every reason to believe that they are the composition of the poet to whose pen they were originally imputed, William Brown, a grateful friend of the deceased lady. That the succeeding lines—

“ Marble piles let no man raise  
To her name for after days

Some kind woman, born as she,  
 Reading this, like Niobe  
 Shall turn marble, and become  
 Both her mourner, and her tomb"—

are the work of a very different author, I, for one, cannot bring myself to believe! Why should two different bards be engaged on the production of one short epitaph, unless they were separate epitaphs having no connection with one another; which it is obvious they are not, since the second portion is a continuation of the first? The theory of the dual authorship serves merely as an excuse to the admirers of "Rare Ben Jonson" to cover him with the honour and glory of having written the first and finest portion; the second, according to his partisans, being of too inferior a quality to be his property: an unjust and illogical argument at its best!

Although married to a nobleman occupying so lofty a position in the State as Lord Pembroke, the Countess seems, in spite even of her intimacy both with Elizabeth and James and the greatest men of the reigns, to have taken but little interest in politics or the intrigues of Court. The only known case recorded of her exerting her influence



to political ends is a letter written to her brother Robert, imploring him to strain every nerve to save the life of Sir Walter Raleigh, then lying in the Tower under sentence of death.

Perhaps the most fascinating trait in her long and honourable life is her devotion to Sir Philip, of which history fails to reveal a brother so illustrious possessed of a sister of a type so noble as the companion of his exile, to whom he dedicated the "Arcadia," or of a sister more worthy of the affection and companionship of such a brother. The fulness of the love the latter bore her cannot be better demonstrated than by reproducing his dedication of the "Arcadia," which, besides proving how deep and true were his feelings towards his sister, contradicts and utterly disproves the theory raised in certain quarters that the Countess may have had as much to do with its authorship as Sir Philip himself; a theory that it is difficult to imagine any sensible person, having previously read this dedication, could possibly believe:—

"TO MY DEAR LADY AND SISTER, THE COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE.—Here now have you

(most dear and most worthy to be most dear lady) this idle work of mine, which I fear, like the spider's web, will be thought fitter to be swept away than worn to any other purpose. For my part, in very truth (as the cruel fathers amongst the Greeks were wont to do to the babes they would not foster), I could not find it in my heart to cast out in some desert of forgetfulness this child, which I am loath to father. But you desired me to do it, and your desire to my heart is an absolute commandment. Now it is done only for you, only to you; if you keep it to yourself, or to such friends who will weigh errors in the balance of goodwill, I hope for the father's sake it will be pardoned, perchance made much of, though in itself it have deformities, for indeed for severer eyes it is not, being but a trifle, and that triflingly handled. Your dear self can best witness the manner, being done in loose sheets of paper, most of it in your presence, the rest by sheets sent unto you as fast as they were done.

“In sum, a young head not so well staid as I would it were (and shall be, when God will), having many, many conceits begotten in it, if it had not been in some way delivered, would have grown a

monster, and more sorry might I be that they came in than they got out. But his chief safety shall be the not walking abroad, and his chief protection the bearing the livery of your name, which, if much goodwill do not deceive me, is worthy to be a sanctuary for a great offender. This say I, because I know the virtue so, and this say I, because it may ever be so, or to say better, because it ever 'will' be so. Read it, then, at your idle times, and the follies your good judgment will find it, blame not, but laugh at. And so looking for no better stuff than, as in a haberdasher's shop gloves or feathers you will continue to love the writer, who doth exceedingly love you, most heartily prays you may long live to be a principal ornament to the family of the Sidneys.

“ Your loving brother,

“ PHILIP SIDNEY.”

## CHAPTER VI

ROBERT SIDNEY, EARL OF LEICESTER, K.G.,  
GOVERNOR OF FLUSHING

(1563-1626.)

THE career of Robert, younger brother to Sir Philip Sidney, furnishes an extraordinary example of the manner Fortune lavishes her gifts on those whom she chooses to favour. If ever there was a case of the youth and early manhood of a cadet of a distinguished family evincing but slender anticipations of a brilliant future, that was the case of Robert Sidney.

His natural talents completely put into the shade by those of his elder brother, to such an extent that even his father deemed the best counsel he could give was to advise him to closely imitate Sir Philip and take him for his model; often devoid of funds; and as he grew older

frequently out of favour—in fact in serious disfavour—with the Queen, it would have been a bold prophet to foretell his living to become governor of Flushing, the head of his house, the owner of a great estate, a Knight of the Garter, a counsellor of kings, and a Peer of the Realm. Yet so it was to be. “*Pallida Mors*,” which thought fit to cut off the hero of Zutphen in the bloom of his prime, at the early age of thirty-two, permitted Robert to pass the span of sixty-three before gathering him to his fathers.

Born at Penshurst in 1563, he spent his boyhood chiefly at Ludlow Castle, whence he proceeded for his education to Christ Church College, Oxford. An early portrait represents him as a handsome youth, of a fine figure and pleasing countenance, taller when grown up, probably, than his brother Philip, than whom he was a finer man, without, however, possessing such a fascinating or thoughtful face.

After quitting Oxford, he was, to better complete his education, despatched on a continental tour, spending some two years in Germany, suffering during the latter part of this tour, so we learn from his correspondence, from want of money; the heavy expenses entailed by his father in

Ireland preventing the advance to him of an adequate income or allowance.

In 1581 he returned to England, and was content for the next two or three years to follow—like a satellite encircling a brilliant planet—the person and fortunes of his brother ; but, in the year 1584, this monotony was to be broken by the execution of a piece of daring and romance, alone sufficient to make his biography interesting. This was his successful accomplishment of a courtship which must ever take its place among the prettiest and most sensational love stories recorded in the annals of history or fiction.

This little bit of romance was his attachment to one of the most charming young ladies of the day, who was not only beautiful, but as rich as she was beautiful. In fact she has even been described as the richest heiress of her time, but this is an exaggeration. The daughter of John Gamage, of Coity, in the county of Glamorgan, a gentleman descended from an old family in Wales, whose acquaintance Robert had made during his stay at Ludlow Castle, she had many suitors, who, like those who surrounded Penelope, employed every stratagem and artifice to win her hand. That

Robert Sidney, the younger son of a somewhat impoverished knight, would enter the lists against such a formidable combination, or, if he did, could experience any chance of success, never seems to have entered the jealous heads of the suitors in the first stages of his devotion; but as soon as they perceived how the land lay their rage knew no bounds. Not only this, but the fame of the progress he was making even reached the Court, where it caused special annoyance to the Queen, who had by the laws of that time a right to a finger in the fortune of every heiress. Peremptory orders were, therefore, sent to St. Donat's Castle, where the fair Barbara was staying with a kinsman, to warn her against listening to the soft advances of her favourite lover. But the royal warning came too late. Love, which conquers all men and women, and all things, ultimately overcame the band of suitors, the bashful diffidence of Barbara, her guardian's scruples, and the royal commands. On September 23, 1584, she consented to undergo a hasty marriage with Robert Sidney in the chapel of St. Donat's. The happy pair were only just in time. Two hours after the completion of the match, a messenger from

Elizabeth, hot and weary with hard riding, arrived at the castle, conveying the royal commands that no marriage was to take place and that Robert Sidney was to return forthwith to London.

The position of Sidney, although now greatly improved from a worldly point of view, had yet become exceedingly precarious, for he had exposed himself to the full vent of the Queen's rage, and he speedily found himself in a very tight fix. For some time, it appears, Elizabeth fumed and stormed, but eventually made the best of the situation, and restored the young husband to favour, having previously accepted the assurance that her interest in the disposal of the young lady's inheritance should undergo no diminution.

In 1585 Robert entered Parliament as a member for Glamorganshire, and soon after his election accepted an appointment under his uncle, Leicester, in the Netherlands, where he was present both at Zutphen and at his brother's death-bed in October of that year. For the valour he displayed in this campaign he was created a knight-banneret. In the year following he received the degree of M.A. from the University



of Oxford, and was despatched on a special mission to Scotland to convey the thanks of the English nation to James VI. for his refusal to harbour the Spanish ships in their disastrous voyage round the Scottish coast on their return home. This visit to Scotland, as the sequel will explain, set the seal upon his fortunes, since his winning manners and courtesy had the good luck to raise him into high favour with the future King of England.

In 1588 he was appointed to the highly important but dangerous post of Governor of Flushing, where his arduous duties caused him to participate in much hard fighting with the Spaniards.

In 1593 he was sent on a special mission to France to intercede on behalf of the French Huguenots. During his stay in Paris he had the good luck to please the French monarch.

Returning to his duties in Holland, he saw further hard fighting from 1596-98, and especially distinguished himself at the big battle of Turnhout.

During one of his periodical visits to England, the sad fate befell him not only of witnessing the fall and death of his fast friend and connection, Essex, but also of being the instrument whereby

the refractory Earl was captured and conveyed to the Tower. On Essex and his companions finally shutting themselves up in Essex House after their brief insurrection, Sir Robert was sent to effect their capture. After a long parley between Sir Robert in the garden and Lords Essex and Southampton on the roof, the insurgents were induced to surrender their swords, and bloodshed was averted.

Of the close terms of his friendship with Essex, the following letter, relating to an attempt of the Earl to gain for him high office at Court, is an example :—

“ROBIN,

I do beleeve now that my Lord Chamberlayne will dy. And I am resolved, if his Lordship do teake himself to another world to deale earnestly and confedently for you, for I know Lord Brooke doth resolve to try both his credit with the Queen and all his friends in this cause. But I will protest unto the Queen against him, and avow, that I will think it is the reward of his slanders and practise against me, if the Queen should lay honor upon him. Of these things I

will give you Account, and so, with my best wishes, Trust,

“Your trew Frend

“ESSEX. 4 mar. 1596.

“You know by my hand that this is my Wyfes pen and inke.

“To my Lord Governor of Flushing, my very deere and Honorable Frend.”

The life of Robert Sidney throughout almost the whole of the reign of James I. was an uninterrupted series of triumphs, a blaze of glory from first to last. He was one of the few Englishmen who owed his promotion at the hands of James to his ability, and not simply to the fact of having become a personal favourite of the seventeenth-century Solomon. In 1603 he was made a peer by the title of Baron Sidney of Penshurst, in the county of Kent; in 1605 he was raised to a higher dignity by the bestowal on him and his heirs of one of the lapsed Dudley titles, that of Viscount Lisle.

In 1612 he accompanied the Princess Elizabeth to Germany; and four years after, once more visited Flushing on affairs of State, for which he

was made a Knight of the Garter. In 1618, the title of Earl of Leicester, extinct since the death of his uncle Robert, was recreated in his favour.

In spite of his busy life, Lord Leicester found ample opportunities for enjoying to the full the charming quiet of Penshurst, where he spent many years of happiness with his beloved Barbara, by whom he had no fewer than twelve children.<sup>1</sup> A patron of poets and authors, a lover of science, and an ardent admirer of Sir Walter Raleigh's schemes of Colonial exploration and expansion, he died at Penshurst, July 13, 1626: some fifteen months after the King who had raised him to such high honours, and bestowed on him many costly presents and marks of his esteem. His wife Barbara had died in 1621, and in the year previous to his death he married Sarah, widow of Sir Thomas Smith, of Bidborough, and daughter of William Blount.

Left at the time of his father's and brother's deaths in circumstances of a considerably

<sup>1</sup> Four sons and eight daughters. Of the latter, Lady Mary Sidney married Sir Robert Wroth; Lady Elizabeth married Sir Lewis Mansell; Lady Philippa married Sir John Hobart (their son became Earl of Buckingham); and Lady Barbara married (1) Viscount Strangford and (2) Sir Thomas Culpepper.

embarrassed pecuniary condition, Leicester died a very wealthy man, leaving his large estates in capital repair. This he was enabled to do by means of his first wife's dowry and by the legacies derived from his uncles, the Earls of Leicester and Warwick, who both respectively nominated him their heir; whilst he also benefited, but to a less extent, under the will of another uncle, the Earl of Huntingdon.

Materials for a careful examination into both the public and private career of this fortunate servant of King James exist in abundance. Like so many other members of his family, an excellent letter-writer, his large correspondence—which is of immense historical importance—with his faithful and devoted friend and agent, Rowland Whyte, himself a correspondent of the first rank, has been for the most part preserved,<sup>1</sup> and, as it furnishes matter of the utmost interest, will well repay the task of several hours' or even days' close reading.

Glimpses of the pleasant rural life Lord Leicester and his first countess led, when in residence at Penshurst, may be readily obtained by a perusal of Ben Jonson's quaint poem, "The Forrest."

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Collins' "Letters and Memorials of State."

## CHAPTER VII

ROBERT SIDNEY, EARL OF LEICESTER,  
AMBASSADOR AND SCHOLAR

(1595-1677).

### I.

THERE exists no more valuable aid to the study of the history of the reigns of Charles I. and his immediate successors on the throne than is afforded by the correspondence and journals compiled by several of the distinguished men who moved in the influential circles of those times. The diaries of Evelyn and Pepys are but a pair of examples of this ; yet, highly interesting and important though they be, they are run close in historic value by the papers written by the hero of this chapter, the great mass of whose work has been collected and edited by the industry of Arthur Collins and Mr. Blencowe. Lord

Leicester's papers are not of public importance merely because of the insight they afford into the politics and history of the reigns of the two Charleses, and of the period of the Commonwealth, but also for many other reasons. They form, in fact, a perfect compendium of State papers, of private correspondence, of news foreign and domestic. They tell us of the writer's life as an ambassador at Cophenhagen and at Paris, as the minister of Charles before the outbreak of the Civil War. They contain the most veracious account in existence of the tragedy of the King's trial and execution, and present a delightful insight into his life in retirement at Penshurst; of his relations with his children and his devoted wife, and the career in exile of his favourite son, the patriot Algernon. Even the pages of his very house-keeping book at Penshurst offer charming reading, as revealing an example of how a nobleman of large estate lived in the middle of the seventeenth century, of the price of provisions in those days, who his friends were, and how they were entertained. The art of correspondence—peculiar to all the Sidneys of Penshurst—was possessed by Leicester in a greater degree than

any others of his family, and he was never satisfied, until old age shook the pen from his hand, to let a day pass without noting its chief incidents.

“I believe,” said Algernon Sidney, after his father’s death, “there is a brother of mine here that has forty quires of paper written by my father, and never one sheet of them was published, but he writ his own mind, to see what he could think of it, another time, and blot it out again, may be”!

Well might his friend, the great Sir William Temple, of Triple Alliance fame, pronounce “He was a person of great learning and observation”!

Occupying for several years the important post of Ambassador to France, appointed afterwards to the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland, it was not his fault that he did not rise to attain even higher honours. But his bluntness and honesty were the bar to his success. Straightforward, open-minded, and methodical, he refused to make himself a martyr to the vacillating methods of his master, Charles I.; and rather than serve a King of whose policy he could not approve, or a Commonwealth whose republican principles he disliked, he abandoned politics and retired into the country to pass



the rest of his days in peace, at an age when either under King Charles or "King Oliver" he could have risen to be almost the principal subject in the realm.

The most detailed account—other than that given by himself—that has come down to us is comprised in the references relating to him in Clarendon's "History of the Rebellion," wherein the author acknowledges—

"He was a man of great parts, very conversant in books, and much addicted to the mathematics, and though he had been a soldier, and commanded a regiment in the service of the united Provinces, and was afterwards employed in several embassies, as in Denmark, as in France, was in truth rather a speculative than a practical man, and expected a greater certitude in the consultation of business than the business of this world is capable of, which temper proved very ill-convenient to him through the course of his life. . . . His greatest misfortunes proceeded from the staggering and irresolution of his nature."

The portrait of him drawn by the royalist historian has been quoted over and over again by writers willing to accept the verdict of one

great writer without troubling to consult any other original authorities. I do not say that Clarendon's portrait is not, on the whole, a very fair one; but why a personage who was one of the most learned and accomplished scholars of his day, an excellent and painstaking business man, fearless of speech, firm in purpose, honourable in all his dealings, should be reproached as "speculative" and of "staggering and irresolute nature," I fail to comprehend! Clarendon, it must not be forgotten, was a partial witness when the faults of the royalist party were concerned, and had Leicester obeyed all the ignoble commands imposed on him by Charles we should perhaps have been spared these squeezes of acid.

Robert, the fourth, but only surviving son of Robert Sidney, Earl of Leicester, and his wife, Barbara Gamage, was born at Baynard's Castle, London, December 1, 1595. Educated, like his father and uncle before him, at Christ Church, Oxford, he made such progress in his studies, and displayed tokens of the possession of such rare abilities, that he was selected for public employment at a very early age. In the year 1614 he was gazetted to a regiment in the service of the

States-General, and became a member of Parliament. Both his Parliamentary and military duties, to one or the other of which by the diversity of their nature he could surely have paid but little attention, were terminated in July, 1626, by the death of his father, when he took his seat in the House of Lords, and became the owner of Penshurst, with the rest of the family estates.

In 1616 he had married Dorothy, daughter of the Earl of Northumberland, and consequently a member of the noble house of Percy. Never did a match which was at the outset probably a *mariage de convenance* turn out better. The Earl and his Countess were devoted to one another, and the sound sense of the latter, her strong will, her courage in adversity, conduced no little to the careful bringing up a family which produced no fewer than four sons and one daughter who attained celebrity. Unlike her sister Lucy, the restless Countess of Carlisle, the famous political "intrigante," Lady Dorothy Percy, if not quite so beautiful, was of far more stable and honourable nature than her more lively sister. Her father, at the time of the marriage, was still in disgrace at court on account of his supposed connection

with, and approval of the schemes of, Percy, the Gunpowder Plot conspirator. Leicester's eldest brother-in-law, who succeeded his unfortunate father in the earldom, became one of the chief leaders on the side of the Parliament against the King, and, what is more, his constant and devoted friend.

In 1632, Leicester was sent to Copenhagen as English Ambassador to Denmark, on a special mission which lasted but a few months, and was passed in pleasure as much as business. Four years later, after an interval of leisure mostly spent in literary pursuits at Penshurst, he was appointed Ambassador to France, and resided at Paris, with the exception of a few occasional months at home, until the spring of 1641. His correspondence with his Countess during the period of this Embassy is very entertaining as well as amusing.

On his return home he found himself standing high in the King's favour, and but for the malevolence of Laud, who disliked his sympathies with the more moderate of the Puritan party, would have been made Secretary of State. At this important juncture, it is noteworthy he seems to have been a favourite of the Queen, Henrietta

Maria, who only some few months afterwards was to prove his implacable enemy. In 1641 Charles made him Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, at that date in a state of rebellion and more than ever in need of an able and powerful ruler. But he was not destined to reach the land of his government; for some unknown reasons, his departure being delayed until the autumn of the following year, when Charles finally deprived him of his appointment, and he was again left without a post. It was his conduct at this period that has drawn on him the mild censures of Clarendon, and exposed him to the resentment of the favourites of Charles.

That Leicester evinced no undue haste to start for Ireland is certain. The question is, did he, as his opponents, with Lord Ormonde at their head, asserted, delay purposely; and if so, why?

That he did delay purposely, and that the reason is not far to seek, is to my mind conclusively proved.

That, moreover, he did well to delay, and behaved like an honourable man in doing so, is, I am sure, equally conclusive. To make a long story short, it is not difficult to guess that his reason for staying in England was that he refused

to assent to the orders secretly given him by Charles which, afterwards carried out by other hands in Ireland, have, after the searchlight flashed upon them in recent years, revealed some of the darkest and most miserable pages in our history.

King Charles, it is clear, wished Leicester to treat with the Irish Catholics, with a view to bringing over a large force of them to his aid in the event of coming to blows with the Parliament. This Leicester resolutely refused to do, for which, besides losing the favour of the King, he earned for himself the bitter enmity of the Queen and her friends. Mr. Gardiner, in his *History* (1603-1604), well and explicitly sums up the real state of the case when he says: "Almost immediately after Strafford's death, Leicester had been appointed to the Lord Lieutenancy. Instead of hastening to his post, he loitered in England with no sufficient excuse. Charles showed no sign of anxiety for his departure, and it is possible that he was well pleased to leave the field open to the execution of plans in which Leicester could never be expected to concur. . . . On November 29th (1642) therefore, Charles, immediately after his arrival at Oxford, wrote to request his presence there, on

the transparent pretext of wishing to take his advice. After a long delay Leicester most unwillingly set out (from Chester) for Oxford, understanding clearly that it was not intended that he should have ever held authority in Ireland!"

Such was the duplicity by which Charles was wont to deceive and confound the most loyal and capable of his supporters. His maltreatment of Leicester is but one instance out of many.

Charles intended to console the Earl by appointing him Governor to the Prince of Wales, an important office which he was willing to accept, but in this again he was disappointed, the Queen secretly exerting her influence to get another nobleman put over the young prince in his stead. This was his last offer of employment, and after refusing at Oxford in 1644 to sign the letter of the Royalist Peers to the Scotch Privy Council with regard to their proposed invasion of England, he retired to Penshurst to spend the rest of his days in literary leisure. Since he refused, at the same time, to submit to the authority of the Parliament, his estates were sequestered, but were after a short lapse restored to him by the united influence of Lord Northumberland, Algernon Sidney, and Lord

Lisle. His famous chaplain, Dr. Hammond,<sup>1</sup> had been obliged to leave Penshurst in 1643.

His rural seclusion was pleasantly interrupted by the consignment to his care and more especially that of his Countess, of the royal children,<sup>2</sup> the Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Gloucester, who lived at Penshurst in honourable and enjoyable captivity from June 14, 1649, until August 10, 1650, when, owing to the Parliament considering they were treated with too much respect by the Countess, her family, and servants, they were removed to the Isle of Wight. From an amusing note of Leicester's we learn that owing to the Parliament allowing him £3,000 per annum for their maintenance, he thought fit to diminish his wife's house-keeping allowance by some three-fourths, "which caused a huge storm in the house!"

The departure of the royal children did not terminate Leicester's connection with their affairs, for the Parliament bade him surrender a valuable jewel presented to his Countess by the little

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Notes: "Dr. Hammond."

<sup>2</sup> Clarendon is in error here, for he mentions two Princesses having gone to Penshurst, and one of them having died there!



Princess. He declined, and commenced in consequence a litigation which lasted a decade, but in spite of his firmness and tenacity eventually lost possession of the jewel. In this instance he was not so fortunate as he had been when resigning his embassy at Paris, when both King Louis and the Queen presented him and his lady with precious stones of great value.

On the Restoration, Leicester was summoned—not without much diffidence on his part—to the King's presence, and made a Privy Counsellor. In October, 1660, however, the autumnal charms of Penshurst proved too alluring, and the following is his concise account of his taking leave of Whitehall and the King :—

“After the Council was risen (October 12), I went to the King and said—

“‘Sir, I have not the vanity to think that your Majesty will miss me, or take note of my absence, but, having the honour to be your servant, I thought it would not agree with my duty to go from hence, without your leave and permission, which I beseech your Majesty to grant, that I may go into the country for my health.’

“The King, with a favourable and smiling coun-

tenance, said, 'With all my heart; but how long will you stay?'

"'Sir,' said I, 'I have proposed to stay a good while, unless your Majesty command the contrary.'

"'Whither do you go?' said the King, still with a smiling countenance.

"'Sir,' said I, 'to my house in Kent.'

"'Well,' said he, 'and when will you come again?'

"'Sir,' said I, 'it is for my health that I go, but if your Majesty's service require it, I shall not consider either my health or life itself.'"

After taking leave of the King, Leicester retired finally to the privacy of his life in Penshurst, where the only incidents to mar the happiness of his closing years were the exile of Algernon, his best-loved son, and the death of his wife (1659). With Algernon he engaged in a voluminous correspondence, and succeeded at the eleventh hour in obtaining his pardon. The death of his dear consort is described by him in words of remarkable pathos and beauty.

Worn out by old age, Lord Leicester died at Penshurst, November 2, 1677, after a life lasting almost eighty-two years. He had a large family, having by his one wife no fewer than six sons and

nine daughters.<sup>1</sup> Of his four surviving sons, all, curiously enough, rose to posts of eminence in the State, or obtained celebrity: namely, Philip, who served as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in the interests of the Parliament and took his seat in Cromwell's Upper House; Algernon, the patriot; Robert, the reputed father of the Duke of Monmouth; and Henry, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Master of the Ordnance and Secretary of State, who became Earl of Romney. Of his daughters, the eldest was the renowned "Sacharissa," Countess of Sunderland.

The character of Leicester displays traits of a kind totally different to the majority of the Sidneys. In him we find a prudence, a steadfastness, a level-headedness, and command over his temper often wanting to the more fiery spirits of others of his race. Placed in positions of the utmost difficulty and danger in times of perplexity and trouble, he steered clear of all his difficulties, and refusing to bend the knee either to a royal despot or an illegal

<sup>1</sup> Of these, Lady Lucy Sidney married John Pelham, thus becoming grandmother of the celebrated Duke of Newcastle, the Minister of George II.; Lady Isabella Sidney married her relative, Viscount Strangford; the remainder, with one exception, died young.

republic, he nevertheless managed to preserve his great estates free from loss. A model of a country gentleman, a profound scholar, acquainted with many languages, a sincere Christian, he was as much beloved by his tenants and neighbours as by his wife, his children, and his lifelong friends.

## II.

Appended below are a few extracts from Lord Leicester's Journal, as edited by Mr. Blencowe, which are of special general historic interest:—

*Wednesday, December 6, 1648:* "Collonell Pride, an officer of the army with some soldiers attending him, came and stood in the passage to the House of Commons, having a liste of divers names, and by command of the Generall seized on divers members of that House, as they were going into the House, and sent them away prisoners about 34 or 35 of them."

*Monday, Jan. 1, 1649:* "The Commons this day passed this declaration following: 'The Commons assembled in Parliament do declare and adjudge that by the fundamentall lawes of this Realme, it is treason in the King of England (for the time being) to levy warr against the Parliament and the

Kingdom of England: The Lords' concurrence is to be desyred.' Then the House passed the ordinance for the tryall of the King.<sup>1</sup> 'Whereas Charles Stewart,' etc."

*Tuesday, Jan. 2, 1649*: "Sir John Temple writes, they go on resolvedly to bring the King to justice. . . . The King takes no notice yet that I can heare of theyre proceedings, gave order very lately for sowing the seeds of some Spanish melons which he would have set at Wimbleton."

*Saturday, Jan. 27*: "The final sentence being this day to be pronounced against the King, the Lord President and 67 Commissioners appeared (in Westminster Hall), and the King was brought in, who as at all other times kept his hat on. He refused again to acknowledge the Court, but desyred that before sentence were given, he might be heard by the Lords and Commons in the Painted Chamber or any other place. The Court adjourned and withdrew into the Court of Wards to consider of it as the King desyred, the King was also withdrawn. Half an hower after the

<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that during his captivity, prior to his execution, Charles spent much of his leisure in reading Sir Philip Sidney's "Arcadia." The King's love for the book, and his use of a prayer spoken by Pamela, one of its characters, was severely criticised by John Milton.

Commissioners came again, and the King was also brought, and after divers things were sayd by the King and the President, but none of the Commissioners sayd anything.

“ . . . . After the sentence, the Lord President sayd : ‘ This sentence now read and published is the sentence, judgment, and resolution of the whole Court.’ Here the whole Court stood up as assenting to what the Lord President had sayd.

“ Then the King sayd : ‘ Will you heare me a word, Sir ?’—Lord President answered : ‘ Sir, you are not to be heard after sentence.’

“ King : ‘ No, Sir ?’—Lord President : ‘ No, Sir, by your favour, Sir ; Guard, withdraw your prisoner.’”

. . . . .

*Jan. 30, 1649* : “ . . . The executioners were two, and disguised in saylor’s clothes, with visors and peruques unknown ; yet some have a conceit that he that gave the stroke was one Collonell Fox, and the other Captain Joyce, who took the King from Holmby, but that is not beleaved. This I heard for certain, that Gregory Brandon, the common hangman of London, refused absolutely to do it, and professed that he would be shott or otherways killed rather than do it.”

*Thursday, March 15, 1649*: "Collonell Harrison came to Leicester House, and asked for the Lady Carlile; she at first refused, but afterwards came to him, he read his warrant, and made her prisoner, not suffering so much as my wife to speake with her, and carreyed her before the Counsell of State, where she was examined, and then sent to her own lodging with a garde, which remained there."

*Thursday, July 5, 1649*: "I came from London to Penshurst, where my wife and family with the Duke of Gloucester and Princess Elizabeth had bin just three weeks before."

*July 10, 1649*: "This evening (being Tuesday about five o'clock), the Lord Lieutenant of Irland (that is, Lieutenant General Cromwell), began his journey by the way of Windsor, and so to Bristol. He went forth in that State and equipage, as the like hath hardly been seene; himself in a coche with six gallant Flanders mares, reddyish grey; divers coches accompanying him, and very many great officers of the army; his life gard consisting of 80 gallant men, the meanest whereof is a Com-mander, or esquire, in stately habits, with trumpets sounding, almost to the shaking of Charing Cross, had it bin now standing. Of his life gard, many

are Collonells ; and believe it, it is such a garde, as is hardly to be paralleled in the world."

*April* 18, 1650: "The Marquis or Earl of Montrose having landed from Orkney in the main land of Scotland with 1200 or 1400 men, marched up into the country, was met by the forces of the Parlement of the Kingdom, commanded by one Strachan (who they say is a sectary), and was routed, many of his men slain, himself taken prisoner awhile after, brought to Edinborough on Saturday the 18th May, and appeared before the Parlement, who sentenced him to be hanged three hours on a gibbet of 30 feete high ; his legs and arms to be cutt off and sent to four severall towns ; his body not to have ordinary buriall, unless his excommunication were taken off by theyre kirk."

*Tuesday, September* 3, 1650: "The English army, under the command of the Lord Generall Cromwell, obtained a very greate victory of the Scotts, in a battell fought near Dunbar in Scotland, with no loss at all on the English syde, but a great number of Scotts slain ; all theyre cannon and baggage taken. This was the more remarkable because the English were returning homewards into England, if the Scotts would have let them go, but they thought to have slain every man of them."



*Wednesday, September 3, 1651*: "This day hath been a glorious day; this day twelvemonth was glorious at Dunbar, this day has been glorious before Worcester, the word was then, the Lord of Hostes, and so it was now, &c."

*Monday, March 29, 1652*: "There was a greate eclipse of the sun, which I saw at Leycester House; some sayd it was to cover 10 or 11 partes of the whole sun, but I thinke it was not so much, for it was never so darke, but one could read perfectly, and see the shadow of the dyall plainly. Lilly and other Almanack makers, foretold terrible things, which made common people so afrayd, that from 9 to 11 o'clock in the morning, scarce any body was seene in the streetes, nor doing any business, but every vulgar party kept at home as the Egyptians during their darkness."

*Tuesday, May 29, 1660*: "The King, Charles II., made his entry into London, and passed to Whyte-hall, where the House of Peers and House of Commons severally met and saluted his Majestye. . . . I saluted His Majestye among the rest, and kissed his hand, but there was so greate disorder and confusion that the King scarce knew or took particular notice of anybody."

## CHAPTER VIII

DOROTHY SIDNEY, COUNTESS OF SUNDERLAND,  
"SACHARISSA"

(1617-1684.)

### I.

IT is truly remarkable how the fame of this talented and beautiful dame has endured. The verses composed in her honour by a now but little-read bard have served to hand her name and story down to posterity surrounded by a halo of romance, which has won for her imperishable renown. Of all the fair women that graced the Court of Charles I. "Sacharissa" has obtained the most enviable reputation, and has been recognised as the most perfect type of an English lady of the seventeenth century; chaste, witty, handsome and accomplished. The wife of an illustrious nobleman who died the death of a hero on the battle-field, she became the



“SACHARISSA.”

*(From an Engraving of the Original, by Vandyke, in the Allhorp Collection)*

*[Facing p. 128.]*



mother of one great statesman and the mother-in-law of another. How little could her fond admirer, the poet Waller, have reckoned that the memory of the bashful maiden that he had wooed in vain, who preferred the quiet seclusion of a country life to the pomps and vanities of the "beau monde," and cared nothing for the adulation and flatteries of those whose hearts her charms had stricken, would live as long in history as his own!

"Sacharissa" was a worthy representative of her race, of a race noted for clever women. To Algernon, her brother, she occupied the same position as a dear sister and sage counsellor as did Lady Pembroke to the creator of the "Arcadia." She proved herself also an obedient daughter, a devoted wife, and a fond mother during a long career alternately replete with dazzling triumphs and bitter sorrows, an eventful one from its childhood to its close. Flourishing in stirring times, she moved on terms of intimacy amongst the greatest celebrities of those times. Born in the reign of James I., she lived through that of Charles I., the Commonwealth, and almost the entire reign of the Merry Monarch. The pride of the Court of Charles I., she survived to hear herself acclaimed

as one of the few talented and spotless women that graced the Court of the Restoration. With all her virtues, however, her popularity, her countless admirers, her happy home, and devoted friends, hers was no career of uninterrupted prosperity and peace, since she underwent some very sorrowful vicissitudes, wherefrom she received many hard knocks at the hands of Fortune. Only a few months before her death, she was doomed to see her ablest and best-beloved brother tried for high-treason and put to death.

An excellent correspondent, and gifted with literary abilities of a high order, we have to deplore as a national loss the small amount of her voluminous correspondence that has been preserved. Had her most important letters to kinsmen and friends remained intact, our history would have benefited as it has by the publication of Pepys' or John Evelyn's Diary. As it is, the only remnants worth speaking of from her pen still extant comprise a batch of a dozen letters written to her brother Henry, when Ambassador at the Hague, and a similar batch to her son-in-law, Lord Halifax. Reputed the most brilliant letter-writer of her period, handling a pen dubbed "the most

eloquent in England," it is indeed a calamity that the bulk of her correspondence should have been destroyed.

Dorothea Sidney was born at Sion House, Isleworth, in September or October, 1617. The precise date of her birth is uncertain, but is easy to approximate by the fact of her being baptized on the 5th of October. She was the daughter of Robert Sidney, the second Earl of Leicester, and his wife, Dorothy Percy, daughter of the Earl of Northumberland. Her father, at the date of her birth, was merely Sir Robert Sidney, his father, Lord Lisle, being alive and not having then been advanced to the dignity of a Peerage. Her early childhood was spent chiefly in alternate visits to two beautiful houses, Penshurst and Petworth in Sussex; but on the death of her grandfather she resided till the time of her marriage almost entirely at Penshurst, destined afterwards to prove her shelter in widowhood and provide the scene of her second courtship and marriage. The eldest of a family of thirteen children, she became distinguished amongst them for her grace and beauty, until in her sixteenth year the fame of her charms had become noised far and wide. It was only

natural, therefore, that she should at an early age receive the homage of many admirers, the first of whom seems to have been the poet Waller himself.

Edmund Waller was some twelve years her senior, a young man of ancient family and rich estate, a member of Parliament, and a nephew of John Hampden. Although like his famous uncle a native of Buckinghamshire, it was from the immediate neighbourhood that he first proceeded to Penshurst, when staying on a visit to his cousins, the Wallers of Groombridge Place, the sweet old moated manor-house, which in the course of its venerable history had for centuries been tenanted by Wallers, one of whom in the fifteenth century had rendered it famous by maintaining in honourable captivity therein for the space of twenty years the person of the Duke of Orleans, captured by him at the battle of Agincourt. The poet-politician fell at first-sight a victim to the charms of the Lady Dorothy, and quickly evinced signs of laying siege to her heart. Curiously enough, notwithstanding his youth, he was a widower, having married at the age of two-and-twenty the daughter and heiress of a rich alderman, but who only survived her mar-



riage with him two years. This alliance, moreover being contracted with a lady already affianced to another party, had earned him considerable notoriety, and emboldened probably by his previous signal success he was confident of pleasing Lady Dorothy. But his hopes were quickly doomed to defeat. His fair charmer lost no time in proclaiming her apathy to his addresses, whilst her parents hinted that although they might well be disposed to bestow upon him all in good time the hand of one of their younger daughters, they could not consent to sacrifice their "deare Doll" to anybody unable to add rank to the qualifications of a good estate. But Waller was not disposed to surrender at discretion, being determined to carry on the siege by dint of invoking the aid of the Muses. Ode after ode accordingly he composed at Groombridge or at Penshurst in praise of his "matchless dame," but with no avail, so far as the success of his courtship was concerned; whilst the popularity that greeted these creations of his genius only attracted other suitors to court a lady about whose beauty such skilful lyrics had been written. In putting the seal to his own reputation he had cut away the ground from under him, and speedily

had to abandon the pursuit to less eloquent competitors.

In examining the names and qualifications of these numerous suitors for the hand of Dorothy, one cannot forbear remarking that marrying for money or a title seems to have been as much the vogue in the England of the seventeenth century as of the nineteenth. In Lady Leicester's letters on the subject of her "deare Doll's" marriage, we find the most mercenary spirit displayed. Thus with reference to Mademoiselle de Rohan, a great French heiress, supposed to be engaged to Lord Devonshire, who she thought might well be displaced in favour of her own son Philip, Lord Lisle, we find her writing to her husband in Paris:—

"If they have any inclination to place her in England, I pray thee let Philip take courage and try his fortune, for I hear she looked much at him as if she liked him well, and I do not think that four or five thousand pounds a year difference in the Estate will prove so considerable as they expect. Perhaps, if you could handsomely make it known that my Lord of Devonshire's Estate will be but £3,000 a year during his mother's life, who is but

a young woman, they would not be very forward to entertain it."

Again, with reference to Lord Lovelace, a suitor for Dorothy, we find her writing to Lord Leicester:—

"My Lord Lovelace, I hear, will be in Town this week, and I think shall be presented to my brother (Lord Northumberland) and then to us. His Estate, my Lord Danby saith, is £6,000 a year, and he now enters on £3,500. The rest his mother has, who they say is rich and loves him very much."

But the rich Lord Lovelace was not destined to win the prize, any more than was Lord Lisle the French heiress, "Sacharissa" finally choosing the man of her heart, the young Lord Spencer, with, it need hardly be said, the full approval of her parents, he being generally considered as virtuous as was the rejected lover dissolute and gay, and being possessed also of an equally fine patrimony. The happy pair, aged respectively nineteen and twenty-two, were eventually married, after a short engagement, at Penshurst, on July 20, 1639.

Faithful to the last in his admiration for "Sacharissa," the ubiquitous Waller could not

refrain from taking up his pen on such an important occasion as the nuptials of the mistress of his heart, and not liking apparently to address the bride herself, wrote the following quaint but witty letter to her sister Lucy :—

“MADAM,—In this common joy at Penshurst, I know none to whom complaints may come less unreasonable than to your Ladyship, the loss of a bed-fellow being almost equal to that of a Mistress, and therefore you ought at least to pardon, if you consent not to, the imprecations of the deserted, which just Heaven no doubt will hear! May my Lady Dorothy (if we may yet call her so) suffer as much and have the like passion for this young Lord whom she has preferred to the rest of mankind, as others have had for her. And may this love, before the year go about, make her taste the first curse imposed on womanhood, the pains of becoming a Mother! May her first-born be none of her own sex, not so like her but that he may resemble her Lord as much as herself!

—“May she, that always affected silence and retiredness, have the house filled with the noise and number of her children; and hereafter, of her

grand-children ! And then may she arrive at that great curse, so much declined by fair ladies, old age ! May she live to be very old, and yet seem young ; be told so by her glass, and have no aches to inform her of the truth ! And when she shall appear to be mortal, may her Lord not mourn for her, but go hand in hand with her to that place where we are told there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage ; that being there, divorced, we may all have an equal interest in her again ! My revenge being immortal, I wish all this may befall their posterity to the world's end and afterwards !

“To you, Madam, I wish all good things ; and that this loss may in good time be happily supplied with a more constant bed-fellow of the other sex. Madam, I humbly kiss your hands, and beg pardon for this trouble from

“Your Ladyship's most humble servant,  
“EDMUND WALLER.”

## II.

The blissful married life of the Sunderlands was not destined to reach longevity. Notwithstanding, which the young wife was enabled to

fulfil the kind wishes of Waller, and gave birth to a family of two sons and two daughters. Her husband, too, won such signal success at Court that he was created Earl of Sunderland, although at the date of his creation being but barely three and twenty years old. The residence of the Earl and his Countess, when free from their attendance at the Court, where the charms of "Sacharissa" sustained as great a triumph as they had in the Kentish weald, was made at Althorp, the seat of the Spencers.

Alas that the internecine struggle between King and Parliament was so soon to shatter "Sacharissa's" dreams of a long and lovely wedded life! The first battle of Newbury, and all is over! The golden days of her delight are gone for ever! The young wife, worshipping a husband well worthy of esteem from such a wife, becomes a widow! Comedy has with a vengeance speedily been transformed into Tragedy!

To "Sacharissa" the outbreak of the Civil War had fallen as a heavy blow, for it presented to her gaze the sad sight not only of her countrymen, of her friends divided against one another, but even of her very kindred up in arms against their own

flesh and blood. Her husband, with her father, declared with reluctance for King Charles, but her brothers and uncle, Lord Northumberland, for "King Pym" and the Parliament. It was, as we can well imagine, a source of many tears to be obliged to bid adieu to her gallant young cavalier riding forth to the wars. But she determined to bear up and be of good courage, for it seemed almost absurd to anticipate that the sacrifice of so tender a victim should be demanded at the altar of Mars. Yet so it was destined to be, and although Lord Sunderland emerged unscathed from the fiery ordeal of Edgehill and its attendant campaign, even finding an opportunity to pay a subsequent visit to his family circle, he was then to embrace his beautiful spouse for the last time. At Newbury he did not prove so lucky, and charging in the front rank of the Royal troop as a volunteer, fell early in the day.

The cannon of the Roundheads at Newbury cut short the lives of other leaders on the Royalist side as noble as that of the young Earl, Lord Carnarvon, and the chivalrous, studious Falkland falling close to him in the thick of the fray. But no career abruptly concluded on that fatal field had been

deemed so bright and promising as his. On the rights and merits of the question in dispute between the King and his people, he held much the same views as Lord Falkland. No friend to the malevolent advisers who possessed the ear of his royal master, it was to him a bitter struggle to abandon the side of his cherished wife and engage in the horrors of a civil war, for he was conscious of fighting on behalf of a king who had been little better than a tyrant to his people; but like so many others of the nobility his loyalty was staunch and true, and he conceived no other course open save to throw in his fortunes with those of Charles. "Except in the cause of his death," spoke a member of the Long Parliament at Westminster, "Lord Sunderland has been always a true patriot"!

"Here," writes Clarendon, at the first battle at Newbury, "fell the Earl of Sunderland, a Lord of great fortune, tender years, being not above three-and-twenty years of age, and an early judgment; who having no command in the army, attended upon the King's person, under the obligation of honour; and putting himself that day in the King's troop as a volunteer, was taken away by a cannon bullet."



Of the overwhelming distress with which the widowed Countess, shortly to become a mother of her fourth child, heard the news of her Lord's death, the correspondence of her father reveals a pathetic proof. She received the mournful intelligence of the deaths of her husband and Lord Falkland at Penshurst, whither it was brought by one of Lord Leicester's own servants, the day after the battle.

### III.

For the space of nine years, Lady Sunderland maintained her peaceful widowhood, passed principally at Penshurst in the care of her children. That she would eventually seek consolation in a second match was generally anticipated by her friends ; but she evinced no tokens of listening willingly to the several proposals that were made for her.

At length, however, she suddenly cast aside her weeds, and surprised her circle by suddenly announcing her betrothal to a handsome, wealthy, honest Kentish squire, her cousin, Sir Robert Smythe, of Boundes. This unexpected alliance

seems to have astonished the "beau monde" (such as it was at that sombre date, when Cromwell was king) no little, the deference and restraint with which her second husband accosted her occasioning much amusement. The love was entirely on his side, good man. To quote her own expression, she married him "out of pity." That the match, too, was not favoured by her father may be judged by the fact that he purposely left Penshurst on a short visit to London in order to avoid being present at the ceremony.

The second married life of Lady Sunderland was passed chiefly at Althorp until the coming of age of her son, Lord Sunderland, who afterwards became the famous minister of Charles II. James II., and William III., and thereafter at Boundes, where she was within easy distance of her old home. By her second marriage she had one child, a son.

As time went on, and her charms began to fade, and she visibly grew older, the principal delight of "Sacharissa's" later years seems to have consisted in her devotion to her young brother Henry and her son-in-law Lord Halifax, the "Trimmer." The love that the two kinsmen bore her served

as some recompense for severe domestic misfortunes.

Before the Restoration was accomplished she had lost her second husband. She had already lost her darling little son, Harry Spencer, nearly six years after the death of Lord Sunderland. Further sorrow was her lot owing to the exile of her brother Algernon, and the triangular quarrels raging between him, Henry Sidney, and Lord Lisle. Her eldest son, Lord Sunderland, in spite of the extraordinary facility and speed with which he gained political renown, in reality disappointed her, and she was unable to express but little pleasure in his marriage to the vivacious, pleasure-seeking Lady Anne Digby, whose intimate relations with Henry Sidney subsequently caused considerable scandal. But the crowning blow of all was reserved for the last year of her life, which witnessed the imprisonment, trial, attainder, and execution of her brother Algernon. She followed him to the grave in three months' time.

## IV.

Excellent portraits of "Sacharissa" hang in the galleries of Penshurst, Althorp, and Petworth. Painted by Vandyke, her charms and her graces sung by Waller, her face and figure the glory of the Court, the "Angel in the house" of her delightful home, her virtues the theme of society even after the Restoration, it is unnecessary to heap further eulogies on the fame of the peerless "Sacharissa." Yet it is only fitting to furnish one more brief and particular reference to the verses which have bequeathed her name down to posterity with such tender care.

Of all the poet's efforts, the lyrics relating to the fair maid of Penshurst are the prettiest and most fascinating. They were written when his heart was young, before imprisonment and a heavy fine had for the time being crushed his prospects and ambition. They were imagined amid delightful scenery and in delightful company. Nothing was wanting then to inspire him with joyful thoughts and sunlit day-dreams. Of these the most pleasing and most perfect is his song to the Rose, which remains, and remains justly, the most

popular of all his productions (although it is not absolutely certain, after all, that in this case "Sacharissa" is the subject of his verse!)

"Go, lovely Rose !  
Tell her that wastes her time and me  
That now she knows  
When I resemble her to thee  
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

"Tell her that's young,  
And shuns to have her graces spy'd,  
That hadst thou sprung  
In deserts, where no men abide,  
Thou must have uncommended died.

"Small is the worth  
Of beauty from the light retired ;  
Bid her come forth,  
Suffer herself to be desired,  
And not blush so to be admired.

"Then die ! that she  
The common fate of all things rare  
May read in thee,  
How small a part of time they share  
That are so wondrous sweet and fair."

How interesting it is to trace the curious vicissitudes in the life of Waller, concerning which even his warmest latter-day admirers must agree with Dr. Johnson that "they who read his character will not much condemn Sacharissa that she did not descend from her rank to his embraces, nor think

every excellence comprised in wit!" The weakness of his inmost nature was not long in courting exposure. Detected in the year 1643 of having hatched a well-laid and audacious plot against the Parliament, he was condemned to death. To save his life he promised to furnish his captors with information against his friends, male and female, which promise he fulfilled, to the horror and disgust of the Royal partisans. But the death-sentence was commuted to exile, in addition to a heavy fine which, to do him some justice, was more instrumental in saving his life than his treachery, his great wealth being well known to, and coveted by, the Parliamentary leaders. During his exile in France he married a French lady, by whom he had a large family. In 1654 he was pardoned, and coming home, wrote an ode in honour of the Protector. At the Restoration he turned round again, and wrote an ode in honour of the King, who, on reminding him of his former effusive praise of the great regicide, Waller coolly retorted--

"Sir, we poets never succeed so well in writing truth as fiction!"

In after days, when both he and Lady Sunderland were well advanced in middle age they met

frequently in society, where he experienced a gracious reception from his quondam "Sacharissa." On one occasion, being rallied on his not having dedicated any poetry to her for so long, and on her asking him when he intended to do so again, he obtained his revenge by declaring—

"When you are young again, Madam, and as lovely as you were then!"

This smart repartee was uttered at the house of a mutual acquaintance, Lady Wharton, at Wooburn, in Buckinghamshire.

To offer the most complimentary epitaph pronounced in honour of "Sacharissa" is to quote that written by a writer in the *Tatler*, who lamented that even the brilliant Court of Queen Anne failed to boast a "Sacharissa"—

"The fine women they show me nowadays are at best but pretty girls to me, who have seen 'Sacharissa,'<sup>1</sup> when all the world repeated the poems she inspired. That graceful motion, that awful mien, that winning attraction, are now no more seen. They tell me I am old. I am glad I am so, for I do not like your present young ladies."

<sup>1</sup> The epithet of "Sacharissa" was given her by Waller, in his poems.

## CHAPTER IX

ALGERNON SIDNEY, PATRIOT AND PHILOSOPHER

(1621-1683.)

### I.

THERE are but few of our most ancient and illustrious houses which, in the course of their eventful history, have not during the stormy times of long ago yielded at least one of their members a victim to the axe of the executioner. High treason seems to stamp with hall-mark authority the value of a lengthy pedigree. The Dudleys, as we have already seen, were in this respect most conspicuous. The Sidneys were less so, for only one of them lost his life upon the scaffold, and he was unjustly condemned. This unfortunate representative was Algernon Sidney, than whom no more courageous or conscientious man ever laid his head upon the blood-stained



block of the grim old Tower of London; than whom no man in the act of quitting this world ever shed a more brilliant and imperishable lustre upon a glorious career.

The Honourable Algernon Sidney, second surviving son of Robert, second Earl of Leicester, by his wife, Lady Dorothy Percy, was born at Penshurst, on November 3, 1621.<sup>1</sup> He was thus younger than his sister "Sacharissa," but very considerably senior to his brother, the future Lord Romney. As it is often asked by persons interested in, but naturally ignorant of the details of the Sidney pedigree, how he was related to Sir Philip, it is easy to remark, *en passant*, he was a grand-nephew of that hero. As a child he gave ample proof of a distinguished future. By the age of fourteen he was, according to his mother, remarkable "for a huge deal of wit and much sweetness of nature." From this he seems then to have been devoid of that fiery and impetuous temper which marred his fortunes in more mature years. He was quickly allowed a chance of showing of what stuff he was made, for he accompanied his father to Denmark on the staff

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Notes : "Date of Algernon Sidney's Birth."

of his legation in 1632, and, four years later, to Paris. But the history of his public life commences with the outbreak of the great Civil War. His services, however, were not in the first instance, as would generally be supposed by those who have read of his republican principles, exerted on behalf of the Parliament, but on behalf of the King.

In 1642 he acted as a captain of Horse under his brother, Lord Lisle, in Ireland, where he behaved with valour in some fighting with the Irish rebels. On the likelihood, in the following year, of peace being proclaimed with the insurgent leaders, he returned home; yet, according to his own confession, not with the idea of bearing arms for either the Royalists or Parliamentarians, but with the idea of obtaining, at the instance of his father, an appointment abroad. Pecuniary difficulties influenced this resolve; in fact, from this juncture until the end of his life, he endured the hard lot peculiar to so many cadets of noble families, that of having to keep up an important social position upon very slender means. He was always "hard up." He never lived to experience the pleasure of being even tolerably well off. Of



ALGERNON SIDNEY.

*(From an Engraving of the Original in the Penhurst Collection.)*

*[Facing p. 150.]*



what money that fell to his share he lost a large sum by loans to his unfortunate sister, Lady Strangford, an act of extreme generosity, shamefully requited. Even at his father's decease, when he had become almost an old man, his eldest brother declined to pay him legacies, and a lawsuit, with its attendant expenses and delays, was necessary to win his own. Genteel poverty haunted him wheresoever he went—in Ireland, England, Denmark, Italy, Germany, or France. Nothing tried his dauntless spirit more than the ever-constant knowledge that want of money had shattered all hopes of the fulfilment of his ambitions. Extravagant habits helped, in addition, to diminish his means. On the whole, it is extraordinary that throughout the weary period of his exile on the Continent he should have lived and travelled as comfortably as he did.

In 1643 Algernon arrived in England, only to be arrested by order of the Parliament, on the ground that his brother and he were on their way to join Charles I. From this moment he appears as having decided to adopt those liberal principles which henceforth governed his conduct. Like Cromwell, he foresaw that a non-interference in the

war was a fatal policy. At any cost, the King, for the liberties of England, had to be beaten; while, in order to beat him, means would have to be adopted other than the too "gentlemanly" mode of warfare hitherto conducted by the Earl of Essex. His choice was soon given him. Would he serve the Parliament? If so, he should have a command suitable to his rank, and an order on the Treasury for the overdue payment of his salary as an officer in Ireland. He soon decided. He joined the Parliamentary forces. He was granted a commission in Lord Manchester's regiment of cavalry. That he was helped to form a prompt decision in favour of the cause of the people by the advice of his brother is by no means improbable. Lord Lisle espoused the popular cause with great earnestness, and never wavered to the end of his life in his belief of the justness of the stand against the King, or in his respect for Cromwell. The shabby manner, too, in which their father, Lord Leicester, had been treated by Charles, was certainly not an inducement to side with that faithless monarch. Had the brothers reached the Court at Oxford, they would not have stayed there long!

At the decisive battle of Marston Moor, Algernon covered himself with glory, as he likewise did with scars. His bravery was the talk of both friends and foes. Charging at the head of his men, he had to be invalided to London on account of the wounds he received. He was rewarded by receiving a commission of colonel. But the severity of his injuries placed him *hors de combat* for some months, and his immediate employment was of a civil nature. In 1646 he was elected M.P. for Cardiff.

## II.

At the particular request of Cromwell, the lord-lieutenancy of Ireland was presented in 1646 to Lord Lisle, who did not set out for Ireland till February, 1647, when he landed in Munster with a force of five thousand men. Algernon went with him as commander of his cavalry. But Lisle was able to effect nothing against the rebels, and quarrelled with Lord Inchiquin, the Governor of Munster, a secret friend of Lord Ormonde, the bitter enemy of the Earl of Leicester. Owing to Inchiquin's influence, Lisle was recalled in May, and the post of Governor of Dublin which he had

given to his brother was also cancelled. Algernon, therefore, returned home. Disappointed with the action of the Parliament, in order to soothe him, the arrears of pay, amounting to a very large sum, were paid him, which came as a welcome relief to his pecuniary difficulties. He was next appointed Governor of Dover Castle, but here his overbearing temper and haughty demeanour gained him the ill-will of the Puritan officers of the garrison, and after appealing in vain to Parliament, he was forced to resign his command.

On the creation of the Court arraigned under Bradshaw to try Charles, both Lord Lisle and Algernon were asked to participate at the tribunal as judges. Both attended the preliminary meetings of the Court, but as soon as they perceived how Cromwell and his supporters were bent on the destruction of the King, they withdrew and declined to have anything further to do with the proceedings. Of Algernon's complete innocence in having had a hand in Charles' death, or murder, the following are proofs:—

1. In a letter written by him from Venice, in October, 1660, to his father, he complains "there is something in the Clerk of the Court's book that



put the King to death, which doth much prejudice me. I do not know the particulars, but the truth of what passed I do very well remember.

“I was at Penshurst when the Act for the trial passed, and coming up to Town I heard my name was put in, and that those that were nominated for judges were then in the Painted Chamber. I presently went thither, heard the Act read, and found my name with others. A debate was raised how they should proceed upon it, and after having been silent to hear what those would say who had the directing of the business, I did positively oppose Cromwell, Bradshaw, and others, who would have the trial to go on, and drew my reason from these two points :

“First, the King could be tried by no Court ;

“Secondly, that no man could be tried by that Court.

This being alleged in vain, and Cromwell using these formal words, ‘I tell you we will cut off his head with the crown upon it,’ I replied, ‘You may take your own course ; I cannot stop you ; but I will keep myself clean from having any hand in this business,’ immediately went from the room, and never returned !”

2. Lord Leicester writes in his Journal :

“My two sons, Philip and Algernon, came unexpectedly to Penshurst, Monday 22d, and stayed there till 29th January,<sup>1</sup> so as neither of them was at the condemnation of the King.”

Critics and historians of all political creeds have absolved Algernon Sidney of having held any share in Charles' death, and have applauded the part he played in opposing Bradshaw and Oliver Cromwell, who never forgave him. Notwithstanding this, he has been pronounced the author of a famous saying, quoted over and over again in connection with the execution of Charles, namely :

“It was the justest and bravest action that was ever done in England, or anywhere else”!

It is hardly necessary to remark here with what triumphant glee this has been quoted and requoted by certain writers holding extreme political views. The one and unanswerable objection to this supposed speech of Algernon's is, unfortunately for those writers who have quoted it, a fatal one. He never uttered it!

<sup>1</sup> 1649. Charles was executed on January 30th.

Writing with some fury to his son, in August, 1660, Lord Leicester asks—

“It is said also that a Minister now dwelling at Copenhagen, being there in company with you, said, ‘I think you were none of the late King’s judges, nor guilty of his death?’ (meaning our King). ‘Guilty,’ said you, ‘do you call that guilt? Why, it was,’ &c.”

To this letter Algernon replies from Augsburg, in September—

“I know the Minister your Lordship mentions ; his name is Brookman ; but I do not know that ever he asked me any such question. If he had, I should have given him such an answer as his folly and ill manners would have deserved ; but that which is reported is not in my style, ‘I never said it!’”

From the King’s execution until the Council of State was dissolved by Cromwell, Algernon worked hard on its committees. Afterwards he sat frequently in the Commons. Growing gradually very jealous of Cromwell’s increasing absolutism, the last tie which bound him to the service of the Protector was broken when, in company with the

rest of the House, he was expelled, in that ever memorable scene when "that bauble" was taken away, and the members driven out like a flock of sheep.

No more interesting account exists of this dramatic scene than is rendered by Lord Leicester in his Journal, viz.—

"1653. *Wednesday, April 20th.* The Parle-ment sitting as usuall, and being on debate upon the Bill, . . . the Lord Generall Cromwell came into the House, clad in plain black clothes with gray worsted stockings, and sate down as he used to do in his accustomed place. After a while he rose up, put on his hat, and spake . . . and chid them soundly, looking sometimes, and pointing particularly upon some persons. . . .

"It happened that day that Algernon Sidney sate next to the Speaker on the right hand; the Generall said to Harrison, 'Put him out.' Harrison spake to Sidney to go out, but he sayd he would not go out and sate still. The Generall sayd again 'Put him out'; then Harrison and Wortley putt theyr hands upon Sidney's shoulders, as if they would force him to go out. Then he rose and went towards the doore. . . . All being gone

out, the doore of the House was locked, and the key with the mace was carried away, as I heard, by Collonell Otley.”

Henceforth, and quite naturally and properly, Algernon threw off all allegiance to Cromwell, whom he looked upon as a tyrant that had, *vi et armis*, put himself in the place of another tyrant.

### III.

Algernon Sidney had, on the overthrow of Charles, confidently expected a free form of government which, if not absolutely a Republic, should be conducted on very liberal lines. But he was doomed to complete disappointment. In common with Vane and other stalwart republicans, he had viewed with alarm the early policy of Cromwell subsequent to the execution of the King, but he never anticipated his advancing to the uncompromising despotism to which he so quickly did. The Puritan soldiery had fought, and the members of the Long Parliament had schemed, to depose a monarch who was merely a worthless and wicked King. They had been successful.

But, unfortunately, their success had simply laid the foundations of the rule of a man who made himself a monarch in everything but name, and governed Great Britain more firmly and partially than any ruler had ever governed it before. Charles had been a King, but Cromwell had become an Emperor. Thus all the dreams of Algernon of a pure and free form of government had vanished in the darkness of the times.

Downcast and dejected after Oliver's *coup d'état* of April 20, 1653, he withdrew to peaceful Penshurst to find consolation in the beauties of his home and the joys of literature, just as his father before him had withdrawn, equally in need of consolation, after his dismissal at Oxford. "Put not your trust in Princes," would have been a proper motto for both father and son. They had both trusted. They had both been deceived.

Not only had Algernon become estranged from Cromwell, but also from Lord Lisle, who, to the general surprise, approved of the development of the Protector's policy. Relations, therefore, between the brothers became strained. Lisle took up his residence at Sheen. Algernon remained on at Penshurst, where in the summer of 1656 he

astonished the neighbourhood, and won the united applause of the Royalist party both in London and in Kent, Surrey, and Sussex, to say nothing of the ill-concealed joy of the extreme Republicans, by daring to offer the Lord Protector an insult with the story of which the world quickly rang. This was the celebration at Penshurst of a play (Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*), to witness which all the leading families in the vicinity were invited. They came, applauded vigorously, and returned to their homes delighted beyond measure. Algernon took the part of Brutus, a particularly favourite hero of his, and had in the course of his acting deliberately attacked Cromwell, again and again.

So angry was Lord Lisle with this bold performance, that we find him writing a furious reproof to his father, June 17, 1656, in which he says: "In my poor opinion, the business of your lordship's house has passed somewhat unluckily, and that it had been better used to do a seasonable courtesy to my Lord Protector than to have had such a play acted in it of public affront to him; which does much entertain the town. I have been in some places where they have told me they were exceedingly pleased with the gallant reception of

the chief actor in it. . . . I think, laying all other matters aside, this which hath appeared most eminently upon this occasion is very extraordinary—that the younger son (Algernon) should so domineer in the House . . . and, upon this occasion, I think I may most properly say it, that his extremest vanity and want of judgment are so well known that there will be some wonder at it!”

Putting aside the question of the propriety of acting this play, there can be little doubt but that Lord Lisle's attitude was only too justifiable in his thus complaining of the usurping conduct of his junior. To him it must have been gall and wormword to be slighted in such a manner, for he was of a proud spirit and quick temper.

In comparing Cromwell with Cæsar, one cannot help remarking that Algernon's shafts fell by no means wide of their mark, for there is one passage in the play sufficiently significant to remind everybody of Cromwell. This passage was probably one of those hinted at by Lord Lisle. It refers to Cæsar's reluctance in not feeling able to accept a crown. It is notorious that the mighty Oliver would have accepted the crown within his reach



had he had not known that to do so would be to alienate two-thirds of his supporters.

Shakespeare seems to have been gifted with an unconscious gift of prophecy when he causes Casca to relate:—

“I saw Mark Antony offer him a crown; yet ’twas not a crown neither, ’twas one of these coronets; and as I told you he put it by once: but for all that, to my thinking, he would fain have had it. Then he offered it to him again; then he put it by again: but, to my thinking, he was very loath to lay fingers off it. And then he offered it the third time; he put it the third time by.”

It was not until the death of Cromwell that Algernon ultimately quitted the shades of Penshurst and went back into public life. In 1659 he was sent with three commissioners to mediate between Sweden and Denmark, and to accomplish this mission proceeded to Copenhagen. It was entirely owing to Algernon’s firm conduct and the valiant manner in which he replied to the furious rebukes of the Swedish King that the mission was eventually accomplished with success. Even the English Royalists praised his conduct on this occasion, especially the firm front wherewith he assailed

Gustavus. It was during this sojourn at Copenhagen that he made himself famous by writing in the visitors' book of the University, below his signature—

“*Hæc manus inimica tyrannis ;  
Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem.*”

The French Ambassador to Denmark was so annoyed with the inscription that he tore the writing out of the book with his own hands.

Soon after the restoration of Charles II., Algernon left Denmark for the Continent.

#### IV.

I shall refrain from relating here the history of the many weary years spent by Algernon Sidney in exile ; from relating the mournful story of his wanderings as an outcast up and down the face of Europe. Always in danger, always in poverty, exposed to constant calumny and insult, it is a wonder that his intrepid spirit bore up so bravely against the legion of troubles that threatened to overwhelm it, that he returned home undaunted, and determined to adhere still to “that good old cause in which I have been from my youth engaged”!

His travels took him from Denmark to Germany, and afterwards to Italy, Austria, Switzerland, and France. At Rome his stay was as one bright day between two long dark nights. He was received there into the best circles of society with the utmost politeness and respect. With the wonders of the Eternal City he was enchanted. With the several clever men amongst the College of Cardinals to whom he was introduced he became on intimate terms. His letters to Lord Leicester at this period are delightful, as illustrating the state of affairs at Rome, where he found ample time and opportunity for study, to further which a villa was placed at his disposal by Prince Pamphili at Frascati. In a letter to his father he furnishes a most interesting account of the chief cardinals, giving in cipher his unbiassed opinion of the characters of Cardinals Albizi, Sachetti, Pallavicini, Spada, Barbarini, Azzolini, Imperiali, Rospigliosi, Palotti, Borromeo, Gizi, and Pio. Of the majority of these he formed a very high opinion, both on account of their talents and generosity.

Abandoning himself to literary pursuits, there is no great event to be noted at length in the rest of his exile until the final period of permission was

granted by Charles II. for him to return home in 1677 from France, where he had resided for some years at Montpellier in the south.

Permission was granted him to return in order that he might bid farewell to his dying father, and arrange his own private affairs. It was with great reluctance that Charles II. gave him leave to return. He openly confessed he was afraid the presence of a man of such great talents and boisterous courage would mean a terrible accession of strength to the Whig Party, but was overruled by the strong family interest exerted on behalf of the offender, and finally granted him a free pardon as well as a passport.

A "free pardon," but what for? is a question that may well be asked. He was not a regicide. He had taken no part in the murder of the King. He had, *per contra*, opposed and insulted Cromwell. Yet why was it unsafe for him to return to England without official leave? The sole reason was that his principles, and determination to adhere to them, were thought by Charles and his advisers to constitute a standing menace to the monarchy. It was thought best, therefore, to condemn him to perpetual exile. Nay, further, attempts were even

made to have him privately assassinated at Augsburg. In offence and defence, Algernon Sidney too had been by no means idle in his exile. He had consorted for some time in Switzerland with Ludlow, one of the regicides. He had implored the States-General, without success, to help him in a scheme to establish, by force of arms, another Commonwealth in England. He had even obtained an interview with Louis XIV. at Versailles, and made the same offer. "Le Grand Monarque" refused on the grounds that the scheme would cost too much, and he did not like to entrust so large a sum of money as that required <sup>1</sup> to the care of one who was but a fugitive from his fatherland.

Whilst in Paris pending his arrangements with Louis, a curious story, true or untrue, is told of Algernon, to the effect that riding one day an especially handsome horse, the King, who saw him on horseback, was so delighted with the animal as to offer to buy it. Sidney refused. Louis therefore commanded that it should be seized, whereupon its enraged owner shot the noble steed with

<sup>1</sup> "Mais je trouvai la somme un peu trop forte, pour l'exposer ainsi sur la foi d'un fugitif." ("Œuvres de Louis Quatorze.")

his own hand, declaring that "the horse which had borne a free master, should never be ridden by a king of slaves!"

His return to England was welcomed with delight by the Whigs and by the survivors of Cromwell's army. In compliment to the latter, he had, during his exile, offered the Austrian Emperor to enlist in his service a regiment composed of those wonderful Puritan warriors who had conquered Britain and astonished Europe; but the English Government prevented the fulfilment of the request.

As it has been over and over again urged in connection with his return home that he was only allowed to do so on the distinct grounds that he promised to take no part either in politics or against the government of Charles; that he gave this promise, deliberately broke it, and was, in consequence, justly condemned to death, it may be well to state that he undertook no such promise. The charges, therefore, of ingratitude to Charles, of treachery and perjury, fall to the ground. He merely asked permission to visit his dying father and settle his affairs. This permission was, without conditions or restrictions, granted him. Surely

seventeen years of exile was sufficient punishment for an innocent man !

A few months subsequent to his arrival in England, old Lord Leicester died at Penshurst, happy to have once more beheld the face of the son whom he had treated none too well, but whom he had never ceased to love. It was his son's political opinions that he disliked, not his son.

## V.

Within a year of his return, Algernon determined to seek election, or rather re-election, to Parliament. In this he was helped and advised by his friend, William Penn, the Quaker, whom he helped to draw up the celebrated scheme for the government of that great American colony of Pennsylvania which still bears the surname of its founder. But his efforts to enter Parliament were frustrated by the malice of the Court. He stood in turn for Guildford, Bramber, and Agmondesham, but in each case the certain success of his candidature was wilfully prevented. At Bramber, the Tory Party played a trump card by putting his brother Henry up against him, although the younger brother, in

spite of his Toryism and unnatural conduct, was afterwards to select Algernon as amongst the first and most important of those whom he wished to win over to the project for securing the succession of William of Orange to the exclusion of the Duke of York.

This action of the Court revived all the old fire in Algernon. It spurred him to fresh exertions. It awoke in him fresh dislike of an unconstitutional king. He entered freely into conferences with the leaders of the Whig Party. He even accepted money from Louis XIV. to carry on opposition to the Government. Upon this acceptance a tremendous controversy for and against him has waged. A bitter pen-and-ink warfare has in consequence been fought between his supporters and his detractors; between those writers who deny that he received a farthing of French gold, and those who assert that he received a handsome sum. Let me say at once that the evidence seems overwhelming that he did accept a sum of money for the furtherance of his plans against Charles, although perhaps not so large a sum as has been alleged. If, as some of his admirers declare, he did not receive any money from Louis, then



Barillon, the French Ambassador, must have gone out of his way to tell his master a series of lies, for he furnishes a most frank account of his financial transactions with Algernon in his correspondence. Moreover, after Algernon's having, as we have seen, already when in Paris asked Louis for a large sum of money for a similar purpose, it is only natural to suppose that he accepted the allowance subsequently advanced to him. He was not the only one who received pay from France, of the Liberal leaders, by any means. Lord Macaulay has in this instance correctly summed up the position in his *History* when he says :—

“Communications were opened between Barillon, the Ambassador of Louis, and those English politicians who had always professed, and who indeed sincerely felt, the greatest dread and dislike of the French ascendancy. . . . Among those who cannot be acquitted of this degrading charge was one man who is popularly considered as the personification of public spirit, and who, in spite of some great moral and intellectual faults, has a just claim to be called a hero, a philosopher and a patriot. It is impossible to see without

pain such a name in the list of the Pensioners of France. Yet it is some consolation to reflect that, in our time, a public man would be thought lost to all sense of duty and of shame who should not spurn from him a temptation which conquered the virtue and the pride of Algernon Sidney."

Let us make a long story short by recording that Algernon Sidney did receive money from Barillon. That he received it for purposes which he considered highly honourable; and that his acceptance of the money was considered right and just by those of his contemporaries who were ranged on the side of Liberty in their battle with the Court Party and its dissolute King.

Against Algernon, the advisers of Charles were quickly on the *qui vive* as soon as he evinced signs of taking an interest in current politics. He was marked out for destruction some three years before his head was cut off. His execution was merely the finale in a tragedy that had long been preparing. Plot or no plot, he would have suffered just the same. He was killed, not because he was proved guilty of treason, but because it had been determined to kill him as soon as the killing could be conveniently done.

Of the villainy thus employed to inveigle him into committing an imprudence, we have ample proof in his own words :—

“Not long after the discovery of the Popish Plot, his Majesty was informed of a great plot of the Nonconformists, and that I was at the head of it ; and though (being admitted into his Majesty’s presence<sup>1</sup>) I did truly show unto him that there neither was nor could be anything of that nature, . . . the sham was continued, as appears by the Meal-Tub<sup>2</sup> business. Though my name was not there found, I am well informed that, if it had succeeded, I should have been involved !”

Again : “Other ways were invented to vex and ruin me. When I looked only over a balcony to see what passed at the election of the sheriffs of London, I was indicted for riot !”

Again : “In April last, I was told by a person of eminent quality, virtue, and understanding, that I should be infallibly made a prisoner !”

Again : “I reassumed my former design of returning to France. This proceeded from my uneasiness of life, when I found that not only the

<sup>1</sup> He had an interview with Charles II. at Whitehall.

<sup>2</sup> The so-called Meal-Tub Plot.

real discontents that grew to be common were ascribed unto me, but sham plots fastened upon me, so as I could never think my life a day in safety”!

## VI.

In the month of June, 1683, all England was startled by the story of a plot to assassinate the King and his brother, formed by a handful of republican zealots. This conspiracy is known as the Rye House Plot, from the fact that the plans of the plotters were concocted in secret at an old residence of this name in Hertfordshire. It seems to have been the object of those concerned to either kill Charles, or get possession of his person, on his return home from Newmarket races. Such a plot, unsuccessful of course, was only just what the Government wanted. An excuse was necessary to arrest the more formidable leaders among the Whigs. The explosion of this “damp squib,” therefore, afforded the opportunity. But, unfortunately for the hopes of Charles and his friends, no important person was found to be concerned in this plot, only insignificant instruments, whose

execution would cause no sensation or surprise. It was then cunningly determined to arrest certain of the chief members of the Opposition, whose foregatherings together (carefully watched by spies) had long been a subject of common knowledge, to accuse them of a share in the frustrated attempt to murder the royal brothers, and thus, by their conviction, with one blow to clear the way for the undisputed power of Charles to rule as an absolute monarch for the rest of his reign.

Orders were accordingly given for the capture of the Duke of Monmouth, John Hampden, Lords Grey and Essex, Algernon Sidney, and Lord Russell. Of these, the first-named was permitted to withdraw, unscathed, to Holland; Hampden was heavily fined; Lord Grey escaped, or was permitted to escape; Essex committed suicide in the Tower, whither the remaining pair were consigned, and where Algernon was condemned to languish in confinement until the month of November before being put on his trial in Westminster Hall. The chief reason of this delay resulted from the failure of the prosecutors to procure evidence, until at last, in the person of one of the most shameless and dishonourable of men, they

succeeded, by bribes offered in return for his king's evidence, in finding one witness, but one witness alone, ready to swear away the life of Algernon Sidney.

To dispose of Lord Russell<sup>1</sup> had not been so difficult. He was executed, on a scaffold erected in Lincoln's Inn Fields, on July 21st, 1683.

On November 7th Algernon was arraigned before a Court presided over by Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys, assisted by Judges Withens, Holloway, and Walcot. Instructions had been previously given the President by Charles that the prisoner must be condemned at all costs. Rebutting evidence must count for nothing. A verdict of guilty must be obtained. After the condemnation of the prisoner, Jeffreys could rely on the royal gratitude. As to the witnesses, there was to be but one; the remainder could be summed up by the production of some of the manuscripts written by the accused. Jeffreys undertook the sanguinary and illegal task. It

<sup>1</sup> By a large number of writers this unfortunate nobleman has been called Lord William Russell. Why, it is difficult to conceive! He was William, eldest son of the Earl of Bedford, holding thus the courtesy title of Lord Russell.

was a hard task even for that astute intellect and lying tongue. On the evidence of the one witness, Lord Howard of Escrick, and on some obscure passages found amongst his papers, the prisoner was found guilty of high treason, after every witness in his favour had been contradicted and browbeaten by the inhuman and half-drunken monster who presided over this iniquitous tribunal.

No illustrious prisoner, either before or after this, has ever been subjected in this country to such a mockery of justice. Against the perjured testimony of Lord Howard, his own relations, indignant that such a slur should be cast upon the name of the first among the noble families of England, openly and frankly acknowledged him to be a villain and a liar. The other judges agreed with every proposal put to them by their President. One of them indeed, Judge Withens, was, so the story goes, actually suffering from the effects of intoxication whilst sitting on the judicial bench.

Notwithstanding the brutality of Jeffreys, the dauntless demeanour of the prisoner at the bar remained unshaken through the trial. Jeffreys was not long in making the unpleasant discovery

that Colonel Sidney was made of sterner material than most of the victims whom he had hitherto been accustomed to bully and terrify. It was no use his endeavouring to frighten a man who had fought in the Civil War, and whose temper had stood proof against seventeen years of exile. The blows he levelled were returned with interest. The sympathy of all the spectators in court ranged on the side of Sidney ; whilst the levity and impudence of the judge excited disgust even in the hearts of the staunchest of the Tories.

Of the three overt acts of treason brought against Algernon, the prosecution failed to substantiate a single one, unless Lord Howard's tainted testimony is to be accepted for gospel. He was accused of having published a treasonable paper, but it was proved that he had never published, nor intended to publish, that paper, and it was more than doubtful whether the doctrines contained in the sheets amounted to treason. He was accused of having paid a man called Aaron Smith to go to Scotland to concert with conspirators there, but it was proved that he had done no such thing. He was accused of holding treasonable meetings in order to invite the King's



subjects to rebel ; but Lord Howard's evidence—the only evidence—on this point was notoriously untrue. Yet in face of all this, Jeffreys had no difficulty in getting the carefully “packed” jury to bring in a verdict of guilty. As for Jeffreys himself, he had performed the prodigious feat of condemning a prisoner on the evidence of a single witness, and that witness a man whose reputation was notorious as an evil-doer and slanderer. He was not long in celebrating the victory over his cups.<sup>1</sup>

After sentence of death had been pronounced, the prisoner, calm in spite of his inmost feelings for so long, burst forth in anger against the iniquity of his trial. Adding insult to injury, Jeffreys replied that “he hoped God would put him into a temper fit to enter the next world, for he was not fit for this.” Algernon in return scornfully asked him to feel his pulse, and see if he were not cool and undisturbed.

Although it was well known Jeffreys had acted

<sup>1</sup> Evelyn relates in his Diary (Dec. 5, 1683), how Jeffreys, a few days after the trial, was seen dancing, drinking, and carousing at the wedding-feast of a woman who had been just married to her fifth husband.

directly at the instigation of the King, it was not expected that the prisoner would undergo capital punishment. It was confidently anticipated that the sentence would be reduced to banishment. To effect this, the whole strength of the family interest was exerted to the utmost to avert the carrying out of the death sentence. Lord Sunderland alone of the highly-connected relatives of the family played the cur, and could not screw up sufficient courage to try his influence with Charles. Lord Leicester's efforts were hampered by the recollection of his support of Cromwell, in whose Upper House he had sat when Lord Lisle. Halifax, however, pleaded Algernon's cause with the greatest courage and warmth. But it was no good. The King<sup>1</sup> was obdurate. The Duke of York backed up the King. The only concession obtainable was that, out of compliment to the prisoner's rank, his body should not be mutilated

<sup>1</sup> In justice to Charles, it should be mentioned that, in the opinion of many authorities, he was in reality willing to remit the death sentence, but was overruled by the advice of Jeffreys, who had conceived a bitter enmity against Algernon, on account of the bold manner in which he had behaved at the trial. I think Charles certainly deserves the benefit of the doubt. The Duke of York, however, undoubtedly supported the judge's petition.

after death by the headsman and his minions, but should be consigned to his executors for private burial at Penshurst.

The execution took place on Friday, December 7th, on Tower Hill, in the presence of a vast concourse of people. If ever a man died a martyr for the cause of the people, it was the man whose destruction that people had come to see.

The condemned man walked from the confines of his cell to the scaffold. He was accompanied by Joseph Duccasse, his faithful valet, the companion of his wanderings, and an old family servant. In spite of the coldness of the weather, his age, and his weakness from prolonged confinement, he walked with a firm step. His was indeed a sorrowful leave-taking of the world, but luckily there was no wife nor children to augment the sadness of the scene. Stern and lonely in his life—his farewell was to be of the same character. He was to die unmourned by women's tears. Of the hardness of his lot, during that short journey to the scaffold, he surely must have reflected. Everything of importance he had ever attempted had failed. The sole reward of all his labours was a traitor's end. Nevertheless, he was buoyed

up by the hope that he had not died in vain ; that the good God would at last punish the line that had ruled England so basely and so selfishly ; that the unjust judge would come to a miserable end. He was correct in his conjectures. Ere five years had flown after his death, the last Stewart king was flying like a craven in the darkness of the night to seek the shelter afforded him by a foreign power ; and the unjust judge was dying the death of a dog—imprisoned, at his own request, to save him from the fury of the crowd !

“I have made my peace with God, and have nothing to say to man !” was all Algernon said to the Sheriff who had asked him if he would like, according to the custom, to address the spectators. At the same time, he handed the Sheriff a written criticism on the unjustness of his trial.

He next made the headsman a present of three guineas, but the ruffian grumbled, and asked for more. Duccasse, accordingly, gave him his pound of flesh.

With a smile, amidst a deep and fearful silence throughout that huge assembly, Algernon Sidney, defiant and undismayed, laid his head upon the

block. He was still, even on the brink of eternity, as fearless and as confident as when he led the charge at Marston Moor, or defied Oliver Cromwell in the Senate.

The executioner, a hideous figure garbed in black, brandished the axe, which gleamed as he moved with a conspicuous whiteness.

“Will you rise again, sir? Are you ready?”

“Not until the general resurrection; strike on!”

The axe was raised high in the air, stood still for a second, then fell with a sickening thud. It was over. Life was extinct. The soul of the great Patriot had gone to its reward.

A few days after, the headless trunk was conveyed to Penshurst, where beneath the floor of the Sidney Chapel of the quaint old village church was tenderly laid to rest at last that restless body, which had known no peace in life, and now so soon, alas! to be but “a little dust quiescent.”

## VII.

Algernon Sidney was a prolific writer. His chief work, “Discourses Concerning Government,” has maintained an European reputation. The

doctrine of the book is the great Liberal principle—that kings rule by contract with their people, and that by misrule that contract is void. Of the rest of his writings, the most interesting are an “*Essay on Love*,” and the Paper delivered to the Sheriff at his execution. Those writers who have charged him with holding atheistic views, and with being a cold and hard-hearted man, might do well to take the trouble to peruse this “*Essay on Love*,” a task which would cause them to modify their opinions. Surely the following lines were never written by an atheist or a man of a cold and harsh temperament?—

“For that same love for which God created and beautified the world, is the only means for us to return unto Him who is the fountain of our being; and through the imperfections of our natures being not able to see, comprehend His greatness and goodness, otherwise than by His works, must make us from visible things raise our thoughts up to Him.”

Algernon was in truth of an exceedingly kind, generous, and noble nature, but possessed of a fiery temper, which was soured by continual disappointments and by the vexations endured

during his exile. "Of a huge deal of wit, and much sweetness of nature," says his mother; whilst his generosity to his sister, Lady Strangford, stamps him as a most kind and considerate brother.

It is often asked, What were the precise political opinions of Algernon? Did he really wish to set up a Republic in England? Were not his views somewhat impracticable, since they led him to oppose not only Charles I. but Cromwell; not only Charles II. but Shaftesbury? Again, to what extent was he implicated in the proceedings which were the cause of his death? Was he devising, on the eve of his arrest, means for arranging armed insurrections in different parts of the country?

In answer to these queries, it may be urged that he was not an out-and-out Republican. What he wanted was a free form of government — not a one-man-despotism. With the exception of the burden imposed on the taxpayers by the maintenance of our Royal family, he would not have objected to the excellent system of government which obtains in England under our present gracious Sovereign. He opposed Cromwell for sound reasons, for reasons as sound as those that

induced him to oppose Charles I. They were both despots. He differed with Shaftesbury because, although he agreed that the Duke of York, a second edition of his brother, ought never to become king, he viewed with alarm the interests and ambitions of the Prince of Orange. In this also he was right. Is he to be blamed, therefore, for deciding on the only course left open, a Commonwealth? As to his being implicated in schemes for fomenting risings after the failure of the Exclusion Bill, there can be little doubt that he did discuss with other of the Whig leaders the feasibility of such schemes.

#### VIII.

To quote at large from the passages deserving of notice in the "Discourses Concerning Government" and other of Algernon's writings is beyond the scope of this memoir, but it is but right to mention some of the most famous and popular of his sayings and writings. Of these the following are a few brief examples:—

"I am glad to suffer for that good old cause, in which I have been from my youth engaged."



“I have made my peace with God, and have nothing to say to man.”

“The general revolt of a nation is not a rebellion.”

“The King (of England) was never master of the soil.”

“A monarchy cannot be well regulated, unless the powers of the monarchy are regulated by law.”

“From Nature we derive all our notions of liberty.”

“In the breasts of all men, God has implanted the principles of liberty.”

“Implicit faith belongs to fools; truth is only comprehended by examining principles.”

“(Queen) Mary could have no title, if she was a bastard; but, if her mother’s marriage was good, and she legitimate, (Queen) Elizabeth could have none.”

“There are no grounds for the theory that one form of government is superior to another, because it can claim to be of Divine institution.”

“Parliament is not for the King, but for the People.”

“Without Parliament, we are like a ship rudderless at sea.”

“Magistrates were set up for the good of nations; not nations for the honour and glory of magistrates.”

“The right and power of magistrates in every country is that which the laws of the country made it to be.”

“The King (Charles I.) can be tried by no Court; no man can be tried by this Court” (Bradshaw’s)!

His favourite and adopted motto was “*Sanctus amor patriæ dat animos*” (“A holy love of country gives courage”).

## IX.

In conclusion, the most appropriate summary of the character of Algernon Sidney is, perhaps, that comprised by the words of Bishop Burnet, who, in the “*History of His Own Time*,” describes him as “a man of most extraordinary courage, a steady man, even to obstinacy, sincere, but of a rough and boisterous temper that could not bear contradiction. . . . He had studied the history of government in all its branches beyond any man I ever knew.”

## CHAPTER X

COLONEL ROBERT SIDNEY, REPUTED FATHER  
OF THE DUKE OF MONMOUTH

(1626-1668.)

WHO was the father of the Duke of Monmouth, who came to such an untimely end upon the scaffold after his defeat at Sedgemoor? To this question the following chapter is intended as an answer. A very simple question, too, it seems on the surface, since almost every History of England has assigned the authorship of the Duke's being to that merriest of monarchs, Charles II. But, after all, the question is not so easy to answer as it seems.

Historians, it is true, have declared Monmouth to have been the natural son of Charles by Lucy Walters, but they have had a very slender basis to warrant this assumption, for a careful review of

original authorities shows that it is quite possible, in fact probable, and even more than probable, that they have made a mistake, and Charles was not the father. Considered carefully and impartially, indeed, the evidence in favour of Charles is not so weighty as that in favour of another claimant, Robert Sidney.

That Charles was not the father of Monmouth was the general opinion of those likely to be well posted up in the facts of the case. But, unfortunately, many of such persons as could have cast some light upon the mystery remained silent, because they found it conducive to their interests to keep friends with Monmouth, the popular hero, whom the King delighted not only to honour and enrich, but was proud also to acknowledge as his own flesh and blood. This silence, therefore, only tended to strengthen the Duke's popularity. Had the circumstances of the case been examined into on the Duke's first coming to Court, what a wonderful difference such a course might have imparted to the story of those troubled times! But to such an extent did vulgar prejudice run in favour of Monmouth, that amongst the middle and lower classes it was freely rumoured he had

been born the fruit of a legal marriage between the king and the strumpet.

Before entering into an examination of the pretensions of the rival claimants, let us ascertain something about the career and character of this Robert Sidney.

Robert, commonly known as Robin Sidney, was born at Paris in September, 1626, the third surviving son of the second Lord Leicester. He was younger than his brother Algernon by some five years, and older by no less than fifteen than his brother Henry, the future Earl of Romney. Of a nature totally different to Algernon, he proved himself in every respect a type of what his younger brother was afterwards to become in the social world. Gifted with the most remarkable personal beauty, which he put to good use in cultivating his relations with the fair sex, he was also possessed of excellent talents put by him to no good use whatsoever, since he abandoned himself at an early age to the gay career of a cavalier and courtier. The pursuit of pleasure, in fact, was ever the chief aim of his existence.

Having obtained, at the instance of Lord Leicester, a commission in the Army of the

States - General, it was during his service in Holland that he first met Charles, then in exile. The pair speedily became fast friends, Robert Sidney proving of just the disposition to suit a prince as dissolute in habit as himself. He was not long, moreover, before performing a signal service, that won the thanks of Charles, by introducing him to his mistress, Lucy Walters, a beautiful but meretricious Welsh girl who had been in England on terms of intimacy with his brother Algernon. The faithless Lucy thereupon forsook Sidney and became instead the mistress of her royal lover. At a suspiciously short interval after this transfer had taken place, Lucy was brought to bed at Rotterdam in April, 1649, of a boy, whom Charles acknowledged as his issue, much to the surprise of his Court, for no sooner had his mistress deserted him than Sidney was heard to scornfully declare he was by no means sorry to release her from his protection, since she was already far gone with child. That Charles, therefore, should have been beguiled into owning the boy as his own son, is remarkable on the face of it, but not so much so when the circumstances are more closely looked into.

At the date of the boy's birth the tide of the royal fortunes had drifted to its lowest ebb. The Commonwealth was firmly established in England with Cromwell at the helm, and in acknowledging the infant James as his son, the royal wanderer could have in no wise anticipated conferring on him any but the slightest prospects of a brilliant future. Never for one moment could he have foreseen that the bastard of a notorious and particularly faithless woman, well known to be satisfied in lavishing her favours not merely upon one but many lovers, would live to be recognised as the popular idol of the English people, the nominal head of the great Whig party, and a claimant to the Crown. With all his faults, Charles was exceptionally kind to his mistresses and their children, as the roll of the British peerage proclaims even at this date, and when conferring upon Lucy the honour of mother of his son, he probably considered he was merely conferring an act of kindness to which in reality she had but a meagre claim.

Not long after the birth of her son, Mrs. Barlow, as the frail Lucy was commonly called, took him to Paris, whence in 1656 she removed to London.

But the Puritan rulers were none too pleased at the arrival of a supposed son of the exiled King, and after lodging mother and child in the Tower, eventually expelled them from the country. Returning to Paris, Charles, after his escape from Worcester, refused to have anything to do with his mistress, who soon sank lower and lower into the depths of degradation, and died a most miserable and loathsome death. By order of Charles, however, her son was well cared for and consigned to the care of Lord Crofts, whose name he received, and by whom he was brought to London in 1662, where he was welcomed at Whitehall. It was after this public reception by the King that the future Duke's position was established. Until then his prospects trembled in the balance. Everything depended on what Charles would do for him. His good looks, his winning manners, and the charm of his person turned the balance in his favour. The King publicly acknowledged him as his eldest natural son, married him to the heiress of the house of Buccleugh, and created him Duke of Monmouth.

On the declaration of war between England and Holland in 1665, Robert Sidney resigned his com-



mand in Holland, returned home, and plunged into all the gaieties of that notoriously gay Court of the Restoration. But his reception at headquarters was not so cordial as that accorded to Monmouth. Charles considered him evidently somewhat *de trop* after the signal success which had attended his recognition of the Duke, and he was by no means anxious to have the old story of his *liaison* with Mrs. Barlow raked up again.

Monmouth also shared the uneasiness of Charles, and having got a King for a father, was by no means anxious to exchange such illustrious parentage for that of a colonel in the Dutch army.<sup>1</sup> That both he and the King had good grounds for wishing Robert Sidney to relieve the Court of his presence was not long in proving correct, for the likeness of the Duke to the Colonel soon became the scandal of the hour, setting all the busy tongues wagging. Relations between King and subject became considerably strained, and were not improved (1666) by the disgrace of his brother Henry, on account of his intimacy with the Duchess of York.

<sup>1</sup> Sidney was, in addition, created by Charles, in 1665, a Colonel on the English list.

But this unpleasant state of affairs, luckily for Monmouth, did not last very long, for in 1668<sup>1</sup> the Colonel died suddenly, at the age of forty-two, and was buried at Penshurst. The young Duke was now left alone in his glory, the chief impediment that had threatened to intervene between him and the goal of his ambition being conveniently removed.

Robert Sidney died before the Monmouth furore had reached its climax, and it is a matter for conjecture had he lived, what he would have thought of the bastard of one of his mistresses being elevated in turn into the position of a hero of the populace, a champion of aggressive Protestantism, a leader of a party, a conspirator in a great plot, a promoter of an insurrection, a general of a rebel army, and finally a prisoner in the Tower, awaiting execution. It was a gay and brilliant career that of the "King Monmouth" of the faithful west-country yokels, but one that, with all its brilliancy, was fated to terminate in the most miserable of deaths. It was that of a butterfly gaily flitting at choice from flower to flower in the summer sunshine, before

<sup>1</sup> Several writers have erroneously put the date of his death six years later.

being finally scorched by the too powerful rays of the noonday sun.

Before taking leave of the career of the unhappy Duke, who but for evil counsellors would probably have spent a happy life and died an honourable death, an incident immediately preceding his last hours has a significance that invites discussion. After the capital sentence had been passed on him, it will be remembered he made every effort in his power to induce James II. to commute the death sentence, but without avail. At last, driven to extremity, he promised James, should his life be spared, to reveal into his private ear a State secret of the utmost importance. James, determined on his supposed nephew's destruction, refused the offer, and the mysterious secret died with the Duke. It is one of the vexed questions of English history what this secret really was, a profound mystery still lacking solution. Most writers are of opinion it was Monmouth's object to inform James either of the connivance of William of Orange in his late insurrection, or of treachery on the part of Sunderland, the crafty and time-serving Minister, who, it is by no means improbable, when the Puritans of Somerset, Dorsetshire, and

Devon were flocking in their numbers to join the Standard of the Duke, had devised in good time his arrangements for rendering himself indispensable to Monmouth should the royal troops suffer a serious reverse and the rest of England declare against the Catholic King. That Monmouth wished to be revenged on Sunderland is a feasible suggestion, but not more so than that he wished to make a full confession of the shallowness of his claims to the throne by the acknowledgment that so far from considering himself the son and heir of Charles, as set forth in the proclamation recently issued to his insurgent followers, he in reality only considered himself the child of Lucy Walters and Colonel Robert Sidney.

As to the absurdity of the story that Monmouth was a legitimate son of Charles, I can quote no better testimony than that supplied by John Evelyn in the pages of his invaluable Diary, corroborating the tales whispered in aristocratic circles in confirmation of Sidney's parentage. Writing at a date immediately subsequent to the execution of the Duke (15th July, 1685), and referring to the chief incidents of his life and the obscurity surrounding the history of his birth, he remarks:—

“ His mother, whose name was Barlow, daughter of some very mean creatures, was a beautiful strumpet, whom I had often seen at Paris; she died miserably, without anything to bury her, yet this Perkin had been made to believe that the King had married her, a monstrous and ridiculous forgery! And to satisfy the world of the iniquity of this report, the King, his father (if his father he really was, for he most resembled one Sidney, who was familiar with his mother), publicly and most solemnly renounced it, to be so entered in the Council Book some years since with the Privy Councillors’ attestation!”

Colonel Sidney seems to have started on a public career at an unusually early age, which may perhaps account somewhat for the unrestrained life he led as a young man. At an age when boys of our time are being taught at school, he was commanding a company of soldiers, whilst Monmouth was born when he was not more than twenty-two. When only thirteen, he accompanied his father to Paris, and entered the Dutch army four years later.

## CHAPTER XI

HENRY SIDNEY, EARL OF ROMNEY, KING-  
MAKER

(1641-1704.)

### I.

TO this member of the Sidney family, although by no means gifted with surpassing virtues or remarkable talent, was allotted by destiny a task of greater fame and prominence than to any other members of his house. Voluptuous and licentious in character, careless in religion, he nevertheless played a part in the history of our country that may fairly be claimed to rank with the achievements of Warwick, the King-Maker, or Monk, Duke of Albemarle. But for the courage and determination of Henry, "le beau Sidney" of De Gramont's "*Chroniques scandaleuses*," we might never have had the "glorious Revolution" of 1688, or William and Mary for our King and

Queen. But for the bold part played by him in obtaining signatures to his celebrated invitation to the Prince of Orange, we might even now be living under the *régime* of the Stewart. One of the most worldly and pleasure-seeking, as he was one of the most handsome gallants who graced, or disgraced the gay and shameless Court of Charles II., this Henry Sidney, the terror of husbands, the hero of a hundred scandals, the reveller, the boon companion of frail women and fast men, died full of years and honours, an Earl of the United Kingdom and Lord-Lieutenant of his county, after having successively served King William as Viceroy of Ireland, Secretary of State, and Master of the Ordnance. Truly, this was an extraordinary career!

Henry, the fourth surviving son of Robert, Earl of Leicester, by his wife Dorothy Percy, and brother to Algernon and "Sacharissa," was born at Paris in 1641. Always the favourite of his mother, who bore him no less than five-and-twenty years after the date of her marriage, he was much petted as a child, his good looks extracting favourable comments from all who beheld him. After being sent on the usual tour to the Continent, he returned in

1663, and received the appointment of Groom of the Bedchamber to the Duke of York.

He was not long in taking up his residence at Court before giving vent to the full flow of his passions and making the utmost use of the pleasures which the beauty of his person, his position, and his popularity allowed him. There were but few fair women, married or single, that moved in aristocratic circles who did not fall victims to his charms.<sup>†</sup> Considered by many the best looking man of his day, he took the place vacated, owing to increasing age, by his brother, Colonel Robert, whilst his conquests were even more numerous than those gained by his close ally, Henry Saville. Even a princess was not too exalted a personage for him to captivate. In 1666 he was dismissed by the Duke, his master, for making love to the Duchess; and after carefully considering the circumstances of the case, whilst making just allowance for the scandal-loving proclivities of the authorities for this tale, there remains but little doubt that the Duchess was equally, if not more, to blame.

Currying favour, after his dismissal, with the

<sup>†</sup> *Vide* Notes: "De Gramont's Memoirs."



King, he was, after serving with the States-General, sent on a mission to Louis XIV. In 1679, after further appointments at Court, he became M.P.<sup>1</sup> for Bramber, and was despatched as Ambassador to the Hague. Upon his management of this embassy revolved the wheel that set into motion the bloodless Revolution of 1688!

Acting as the secret representative of those politicians who wished to see neither James, Duke of York, nor James, Duke of Monmouth, succeed to the throne on the death of Charles, but rather William, Prince of Orange, and his wife, the Princess Mary, Sidney's first object after presenting his credentials at the Hague was to ingratiate himself with the Prince and Princess. To attain this, he exerted himself manfully, and was completely successful. Through him, Sunderland, his nephew and fast friend, managed to transmit intelligence of everything that passed at the Court of St. James to William. Keeping in constant communication, both with Sunderland, his Countess,<sup>2</sup> and Sunderland's mother, "Sacharissa,"

<sup>1</sup> His brother, Algernon, being the unsuccessful candidate.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Notes: "Lady Sunderland and Henry Sidney."

Henry Sidney was able to inform William of each turn of the tide.

Thus, it is safe to say that not only did Sidney lay the initial steps to the foundation of the success of William and Mary, but also that he did so as far back as some eight years prior to the flight of James II. But Charles, evidently suspicious of Sidney's relation with Sunderland, sent him letters of recall in 1681, only, however, to send him back to Holland as commander of the English regiments in the service of the States-General. On the accession of James, he returned to England, and actually assisted at the Coronation, where his never-failing and ever-ready fund of wit asserted itself in a peculiar fashion. On the crown, which the King was wearing, proving rather unsteady, Sidney adjusted it on the royal head with his own hands, remarking with grim irony to its wearer that "this was not the first time a Sidney had supported the crown." Grim irony indeed! The very crown that he was so carefully adjusting was the one he had been scheming to overturn, and which he finally did overturn a little later.

It was not until the year 1688 that the fruit was ripe for picking. By this time the whole nation

was disgusted with James. Every class had become alienated from him. Even the majority of the Catholic gentry foresaw but too plainly the consequences of the King's impetuous folly. Acting secretly, but surely, as the prime mover in the intrigues that were intended to substitute William for James, Sidney moved about the country interviewing and consulting with all the chief nobles and gentlemen upon whom he thought he could rely. In all these intrigues he undoubtedly enjoyed the complete confidence of Sunderland, the Secretary of State, whose morals were of as easy a nature as his fidelity to his King, since he openly permitted his uncle to make love to his wife, who was by no means loath to return his affection.

## II.

At length, all being ready, Sidney took a duplicate copy of invitation to the Prince of Orange to come over to England, an invitation which was drawn up at his advice and direction, and worded according to his suggestions. Flying with it in secret (for the country had at last got too hot to

hold him), Henry Sidney arrived at the Hague with this precious document, one of the most important in history. This invitation (of which Admiral Herbert, who went disguised as a common sailor, carried another copy) bore the signatures of Lumley, Shewsbury, Devonshire, Danby, Compton, Bishop of London, and Admiral Russel, as well as his own, and was received with delight by the Prince, who lost no time in setting out on that famous expedition that was to instal him and his Princess on the British throne by the joint titles of William III. and Mary II.

It is concerning this period—the great crisis—of Henry Sidney's life that Lord Macaulay in his History has introduced him into the pages of his work, and has, with a lack of fairness towards characters whom it was his object to belittle, thought fit to represent him as a kind of ignorant and dishonest buffoon, carefully ignoring the merits of the intensely difficult, arduous, and perilous services in which he risked his head on behalf of William. In speaking of Henry Sidney he says:—

“Sidney, with a sweet temper and winning manners, seemed to be deficient in capacity

and knowledge, and to be sunk in voluptuousness and indolence. His face and form were eminently handsome. In his youth he had been the terror of husbands ; and, even now, at near fifty, he was the favourite of women and the envy of younger men. He had formerly resided at the Hague in a public character, and had then succeeded in obtaining a large share of William's confidence. Many wondered at this : for it seemed that between the most austere of statesmen and the most dissolute of idlers there could be nothing in common. Swift, many years later, could not be convinced that one whom he had known only as an illiterate and frivolous old rake could really have played a part in a great Revolution. . . . Incapable, ignorant, and dissipated as he seemed to be, he understood or rather felt, with whom it was necessary to be reserved. . . . Sidney, whose notions of a conscientious scruple were extremely vague. . . . A formal invitation transcribed by Sidney, but drawn up by some person better skilled than Sidney in the art of composition !”

Such are some of the specimens of the references to Henry Sidney contained in the pages of Macau-

lay's romance. A tissue of absurdities from beginning to end! False in his facts, unjust in his deductions, malevolent as he has shown himself in numerous instances to people of high character, in no instance has Macaulay deliberately falsified the character of any of the celebrated men who figure on his broad and glowing canvas more than he has done the principal English supporter of his prime favourite, William of Orange. It would almost seem that in uttering the above he was biassed by a personal dislike or had received some grievous injury from the man he has so maligned! In that Sidney was a man of dissolute habits he is correct, but as to his being incompetent, dishonourable, incapable, ignorant, and illiterate, he is as far from the truth as it is possible for him to be. Sidney must have been a marvellous character, if after being Ambassador to the Hague, an industrious keeper of a voluminous diary, and a constant correspondent, he was in reality "ignorant," "incapable," and "illiterate"!

Macaulay has here either erred from a lamentable ignorance of his character, or has been guilty of wilful misrepresentation of facts. Probably from both. For example, either he did not know

or else deliberately concealed the fact that Swift (ever spiteful and mean to those who would not bow down and worship him) had the strongest reasons for disliking Sidney, because he had refused him a post. Macaulay, however, is quite willing to back Swift's partial verdict *contra mundum*; just in the same way as he has had recourse to the most one-sided and dubious authorities in order to substantiate his worst charges against Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee; against William Penn, the Quaker, and against the Duke of Marlborough; and just in the same way, on the other hand, that he has made his hero William ridiculous by painting him as "the most austere of statesmen," as a model husband, a patriotic and disinterested king, who never in the whole course of his career committed a political mistake or a mortal sin!

But what was Macaulay's secret reason in going out of his way to vilify the only Englishman whom his hero-king could ever trust? I surmise that the real reason was this, a reason which he has carefully omitted all mention of in his history: namely, that Romney's ultimate verdict on William's rule in England was the reverse of

flattering. That Romney's verdict in this particular was of the highest value, Macaulay well knew, because he was trusted by William as nobody was, save his most intimate Dutch advisers. Again, Romney had no plea for criticising his patron unfairly, because he had been loaded with honours and had evinced his gratitude by remaining faithful to him through thick and thin, in good times and in bad. Yet what was Romney's opinion of William's government of his British possessions? It was summed up in this one sentence to Lord Halifax :—

“I never cease to curse the hour in which I brought King William into England”!

Could Macaulay be ignorant of this statement? It is almost certain that he could not!

As to the charge of Sidney being so unskilled in the art of composition as to be at a loss to draw up a letter to a man with whom he had been for years a close correspondent, it is nonsense too absurd for serious criticism. It is almost exactly on a par with Macaulay's ridiculous account of Father Huddleston's reception of Charles the Second into the Church of Rome. Of Huddleston he declares the honest monk was so wanting in



knowledge of the duties of his profession that he did not know how to receive Charles and administer the last sacraments to him. Putting aside the utter impossibility of any Catholic priest being so untutored in his duties as not to know how to receive and shrive a penitent, this aged priest in particular had been for forty years actively engaged on the English Mission—the most dangerous and undermanned Mission for any priest to be attached to at that period—in giving consolation to the moribund, in hearing confessions, in administering the Eucharist, and greeting converts. Yet this veteran monk, a member of almost the oldest religious community (the Benedictine) in the world, was so ignorant that he did not even know how to give “viaticum” to the dying King! It is difficult to peruse such matter without a smile, but is it not indeed lamentable that so talented a writer should prove so incompetent and untruthful an historian? So much for Macaulay’s fables! Let us return to facts!

It was only natural that King William should wish to reward the most faithful of his followers, to which title Sidney could fairly lay claim, since for a space of eight long and weary years he had

never deviated an inch in his fidelity to that cause promising to the people of England their one hope of release from the maladministration of the Stewarts. About the justness of rewarding him there could be no two opinions, since he had not betrayed James in the same disgraceful manner as had Churchill, Sunderland, or Prince George of Denmark. Nor was his fidelity to William less honourable after his Accession than before, since at a time when nearly every nobleman of note in England was corresponding, or suspected of corresponding with Saint Germain, Henry Sidney remained as steady as a rock, incorruptible and immovable.

Created a Privy Councillor, he was then raised to the peerage as Lord Milton, and Viscount Sidney, of Sheppey. In 1690 he was for a short period made Secretary of State. In 1692 he was made Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, but was recalled in the year following. In 1694 he was made Earl of Romney. He had been made Master of the Ordnance in the previous year. From 1700 until the King's decease he acted as Groom of the Stole. He was also Lord-Lieutenant of the County of Kent.

Unmarried, notwithstanding his numerous flirtations, to the end, Romney died at his fine house in St. James's Square, of the ravages of that foul fiend the small-pox, on April 8, 1704. He was buried in the neighbouring church of St. James, Piccadilly.

Of his wit, of his pleasing presence and address, many pretty stories are told, and he must have cut a superb figure as a courtier, besides being the most cheerful and delightful of companions. His imperturbable good-humour never deserted him, and he was as much at his ease when concealed in the dismal vaults of Lady Place,<sup>†</sup> on the banks of the Thames, when arranging for the completion of the invitation to William, when his life was in dire danger, as he was when living in luxury in St. James's Square. Through good fortune or bad, he took things as they came. He seldom grumbled. He never repented.

During the period of his tenure of his post as Master of the Ordnance two curious facts are worth recording. One is that it is to him we owe the Broad-Arrow as the Government mark; the

<sup>†</sup> An old house at Hurley, a little village lying between Medmenham and Great Marlow.

other his wonderful public display of fireworks, the first splendid display known in England, given in honour of his master's return from the Continent in 1695. With regard to this first: finding that the public stores were constantly exposed to the danger of being lost or stolen owing to the want of a token to identify them, he caused his own arms, a pheon (double broad-arrow), to be cut on all Government property, a practice that has survived to this day. With regard to the second: all the chronicles and pamphlets of the time are full of the wonders of the marvellous series of fireworks which were let off on a calm, dark night in sight of an immense concourse of people in the streets, and the King, Queen, and nobility who witnessed them from the balconies and windows of St. James' Square.

The greatest stain on Romney's career was his acceptance of a huge grant of the Irish forfeited estates. But in this he behaved no worse, nor so badly, as others of William's favourites, and eventually was forced by Act of Parliament to restore the vast bulk of them. It is, nevertheless, painful to record that he accepted as an "absentee land-

lord" a slice out of that conquered country, amounting to nearly 50,000 acres.

Romney fully reaped the harvest of wild oats which he had sown in the gay days of the Merrie Monarch. His mistresses, as they grew older, and lost both their charms and their favour with him, became insolent and importunate. One of them, in fact, a lady of the name of Wortley, ventured to carry the story of her sorrows to the foot of the throne.

Romney has left behind him a valuable legacy to historians in the shape of his diary and correspondence, which have been carefully edited by Mr. Blencowe. In their pages we read a most charming account of the times in which he moved, and of his numerous distinguished correspondents; whilst his letters to and from his sister Dorothy ("Sacharissa"), Lady Sunderland, are of exceptional interest. The story of his intrigues and peregrinations from place to place during the year 1688 has been woven into a charming romance by Harrison Ainsworth in his "James the Second," where, under the appellation of "Colonel" Sidney, he figures as the principal character.

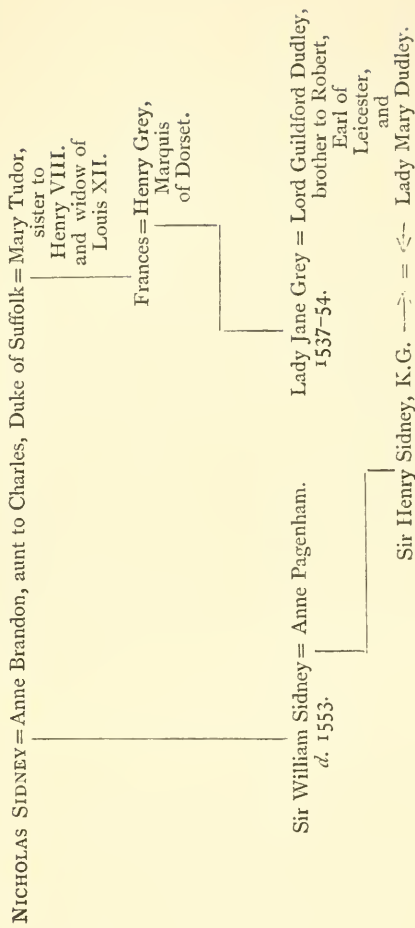
With all his faults and follies, Romney seems

to have been a clever and capable Minister, and possessed of fair literary abilities.<sup>1</sup> The spoilt child of his mother, it is not to be wondered that he gave way to the temptations which his good looks and the giddy life of a Court opened up to him in the golden days of youth. He seems to have been most attached to his sister, Dorothy, of his near relations. With his eldest brother, Philip, he was always on bad terms, and on scarcely better with Algernon; but, after the latter's death, he set himself steadfastly to the task of avenging it on James, who had urged Charles II. to refuse a pardon. He had, in reward, the satisfaction of seeing Algernon's attainder<sup>2</sup> wiped out of the Statute Book.

<sup>1</sup> The attainder was annulled, according to the exact words of the Act, "at the humble petition and request of the Right Honourable Philip, Earl of Leicester, brother and heir of the said Algernon Sidney, and of the Right Honourable Henry, Viscount Sidney of Sheppy, in the county of Kent, the other brother of the said Algernon."

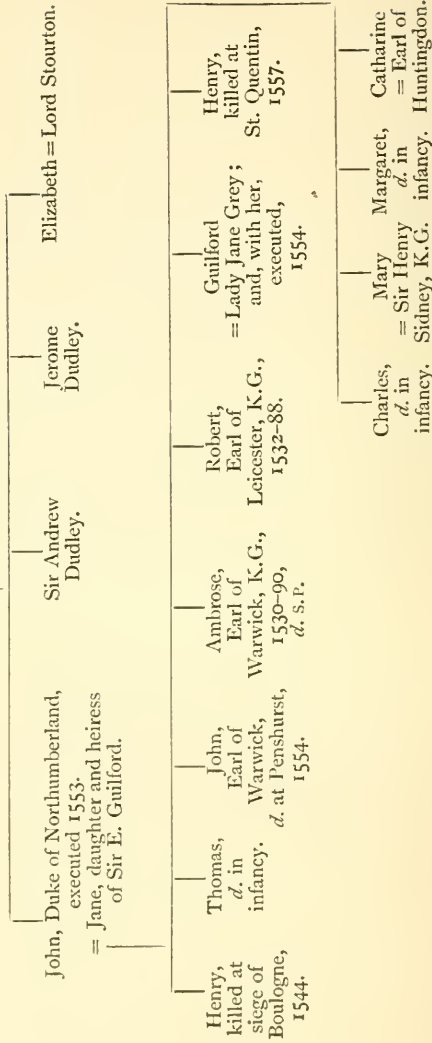
<sup>2</sup> "But yet I can perceive he hath good parts and good inclinations" ("Pepys' Diary," June 20, 1664).

TABLE SHOWING RELATIONSHIP OF THE SIDNEYS TO LADY JANE GREY  
AND THE DUDLEYS.



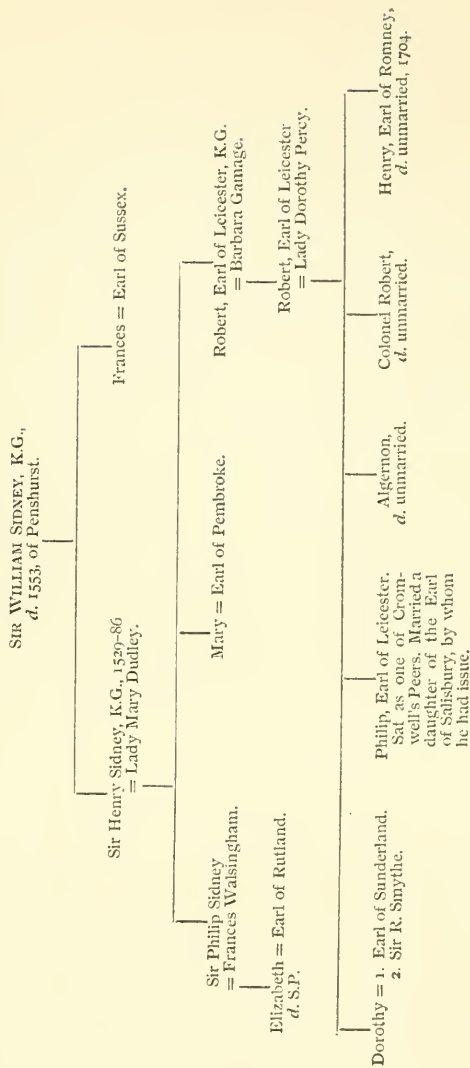
GENEALOGY OF THE DUDLEYS MENTIONED IN THESE MEMOIRS.

EDMOND DUDLEY = (as second wife) Elizabeth Grey,  
 heiress of the  
 noble house of L'isle.  
 beheaded 1509.





ROUGH GENEALOGICAL SKETCH OF THE SIDNEYS, WHOSE LIVES ARE  
GIVEN IN THIS BOOK.





## NOTES



### THE NAME OF SIDNEY.

THE proper spelling of this name is often a subject of controversy. Is it Sidney, or Sydney? Partisans have declared in favour of both forms. The truth is that one form is as correct as the other. From the earliest times, by searching amongst old records, rolls, manuscripts, and chronicles, it is plain the word has been variously spelt. Prior even to the period of Sir William (of Penshurst), his ancestors signed their names in different ways. To establish a precedent in favour of the "y" or the "i" is not difficult, for several famous members of the family even used both forms. Sir Henry generally used the "y," as did Algernon, but Sir Philip nearly always used the "i." His brother Robert used generally the "y," but when he was created a peer, his first title was Baron Sidney. The correct modern spelling of the name may be given in favour of the "i."

Before becoming shortened in Sidney, or Sydney, the name was spelt Sidenie, Sydenie, Sydnie, Sidnei, Sydnei, de Sidenie, de Sydenie, &c.

The name was originally derived from an Abbey in Anjou, dedicated to the Patron Saint of France, St. Denis.

## THE SIMANCAS MS.

THE extracts below are from Mr. Froude's translation of the correspondence of De Quadra, preserved at Simancas, in Spain :—

“There came lately to me (De Quadra) Sir Henry Sidney, who is married to Lord Robert's (Dudley) sister, a high-spirited, noble sort of person, and one of the best men that the Queen had about the Court. . . . He was surprised that I had not advised your Majesty (Philip of Spain) to use the opportunity to gain Lord Robert's goodwill. Your Majesty will find Lord Robert as ready to obey you and do you service as one of your own vassals. . . . He added that if I could be satisfied about Lady Dudley's (Amy Robsart) death, he thought I could not object to informing your Majesty of what he had said. The Queen and Lord Robert were lovers, but they intended honest marriage, and nothing wrong had taken place between them which could not be set right with your Majesty's help. As to Lady Dudley's death, he said that he had examined carefully into the circumstances and he was satisfied that it had been accidental, although he admitted that others thought differently. . . . He allowed that there was hardly a person who did not believe that there had been foul play. The preachers in the pulpit spoke of it, not sparing even the honour of the Queen. . . . Of this I am certain, that if she (Elizabeth) marry Lord Robert without your Majesty's sanction, she will lose her throne. . . . When she sees that she has nothing to hope from your Majesty she will make a worse plunge to satisfy her appetite. She is infatuated to a degree which would be a notable fault in any woman, much more in one of her exalted rank.” (January, 1561.)

## SIR PHILIP AND EDMUND MOLYNEUX.

THAT Sir Philip Sidney possessed what is commonly called “a temper of his own,” may, amongst other in-

stances, be proved by reference to a certain letter addressed to Molyneux, his father's secretary in Ireland, whom he suspected of having opened his letters :—

“MR. MOLYNEUX,—Few words are best. My letters to my Father have come to the ears of some ; neither can I condemn any but you. If it be so, you have played the very knave with me ; and so I will make you know, if I have good proof of it.

“That for so much as is past. For that is to come, I assure you before God, that if ever I know you do so much as read any letter I write to my Father, without his commandment or my consent, I will thrust my dagger into you ; trust to it, for I speak in earnest.

“31 *May*, 1578.

“PHILIP SIDNEI.”

If innocent of this charge, as the accused person vehemently declared he was, Molyneux heaped coals of fire on Sir Philip's head by proving ever after a thoroughly honest friend and advocate. He is also believed to be the author of the panegyric on Sir Philip, published in Holinshed. His panegyric (presuming it to be his) of Sir Henry, published in the same volume, is one of the most perfect gems of its kind in existence.

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“LEICESTER'S COMMONWEATH.”

THIS is the title by which a book containing a series of scurrilous charges brought against Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and widely circulated during his lifetime, is generally known. Its authorship was first ascribed to the Jesuit Parsons, and called “Father Parsons' Green-coat,” from the colour of the edges of the leaves of the original edition, but it is now universally acknowledged that Parsons was not the author. In it Leicester was accused of all manner of crimes, of which wholesale murder by the art of using a subtle poison was the chief. Sir Walter

Scott seems to have relied largely on its accusations when preparing "Kenilworth," a work which is full of the most glaring historical errors. It was translated into both French and Latin.

Owing to the sensation produced by it and the damage it was likely to cause Leicester's reputation, Sir Philip Sidney set himself the task of answering it soon after its introduction into England (it was printed abroad), in 1584. In this answer, he strove his utmost to defend his uncle from the charges laid against him, and whilst indignantly repudiating the sneer that his relations, the Dudleys, were a base-born family, we find him proudly writing, "I am a Dudlei in blood, that Duke's daughter's son, and do acknowledge, though, in all truth, I may justly affirm, that I am by my Father's syde, of ancient and allways well esteemed and welmatched gentry, yet I do acknowledg, I sai, that my cheefest honour is to be a Dudlei!"

The industry of Mr. Collins was the means of unearthing and publishing this spirited rejoinder to the attack on Leicester. Underneath the original manuscript copies were found the following interesting endorsements:—

"A discourse in defence of the Earl of Leycester."	}	Endorsed by ROBERT SIDNEY, 1st (SIDNEY) EARL OF LEICESTER, (brother to Sir Philip).
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"In my Uncle's own Hand, worthy to be better known to the world."	}	Endorsed by ROBERT SIDNEY, 2nd Earl (nephew to Sir Philip).
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#### SIR PHILIP AND THE CHURCH OF ROME.

FROM his first appearance on the stage of public life, Sir Philip Sidney assumed an attitude of uncompromising hostility towards the Roman Catholic Church. This hostility, however, did not prevent him evincing a kind sympathy to-

wards the persecuted English Catholics, nor did it prevent him feeling a profound respect for many good Englishmen who remained firm in their allegiance to the ancient faith. It was the political side of Catholicism that he most disliked, and he was never tired of inveighing against the Temporal Power of the Pope, and demonstrating how terribly England had suffered at the hands of extortionate Popes prior to the Reformation. In Spain he recognised the chief support of the usurping pretensions of the Papal Curia, and the alliance between the Pope and King Philip he rightly perceived the greatest danger to the liberties of England.

Considering how well known was his dislike of Roman Catholicism, it is surprising to find in the biography of Blessed Edmund Campion,<sup>1</sup> the saintly missionary priest put to death by Elizabeth for his courageous adherence to the Catholic Church, Campion, in a letter to John Bavand (1577), writing: "A few months ago Philip Sidney came from England to Prague as Ambassador, magnificently provided. He had much conversation with me—I hope not in vain, for to all appearance he was most eager. I commend him to your sacrifices, for he asked the prayers of all good men, and at the same time put into my hands some alms to be distributed to the poor for him, which I have done. Tell this to Dr. Nicholas Sanders, because if any one of the labourers sent into the vineyard from the Douai seminary has an opportunity of watering this plant, he may watch the occasion for helping a poor wavering soul. If this young man, so wonderfully beloved and admired by his countrymen, chances to be converted, he will astonish his noble father, the Deputy of Ireland, his uncles the Dudleys, all the young courtiers, and Cecil himself. Let it be kept secret."

This is a highly interesting letter. It affords proof positive of the strong position Philip Sidney had won for himself

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<sup>1</sup> By Richard Simpson (John Hodges).

at the early age of twenty-three. It also shows how intensely eager the writer was to capture so famous a prize. But, all the same, read as it stands, the letter is somewhat misleading. Sir Philip was by no means so near to becoming a convert to Catholicism as the hopeful language of the writer tends to imply. Campion and he were old friends. Campion was a *protégé* of Sir Henry Sidney, who had been a most kind patron to him, and for whom he ever manifested the highest respect, who<sup>1</sup> had also saved him from imprisonment when in Ireland. Campion and Philip had been friends at Oxford, and the renewal of their friendship at Prague had set the tongues of all the enemies of Sir Henry and his family wagging that the youthful envoy was secretly arranging to go over to Rome. But the latter step was never on any occasion contemplated by Sir Philip at any portion of his existence. His friendship with the eloquent Jesuit merely extorted from him the admission that Campion was a magnificent preacher, and that he hoped to be remembered in the good priest's prayers. Nothing more.

At the time of Campion's arrest, which was followed by his execution at Tyburn, where he electrified all the beholders by the serene courage and self-control with which he underwent his terrible fate, Sir Philip was unable to intercede on his friend's behalf since he was himself in disgrace at Court. This was sufficient to render any word from him in favour of the condemned utterly valueless. Campion's biographer, however, goes out of his way to volunteer the ridiculous statement that "it was at this time Sidney was engaged in his 'intrigue' with Lady Rich. This by itself might have indisposed him to risk much for Campion."

What connection could possibly lie between Sir Philip's intervention on behalf of a Jesuit priest and his admiration

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<sup>1</sup> "No busy knave of them all should trouble him for so worthy a guest as Master Campion."



for "Stella" it is quite impossible to conceive! If the Roman Catholic biographer had taken the trouble to look up his dates, he would have found that "Stella" was married to Lord Rich but a few weeks prior to Campion's arrest. It is, therefore, more than improbable that Sir Philip could have carried on an "intrigue" with Lady Rich at that particular time.

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#### SIR PHILIP'S PROPHECY.

ACCORDING to Fulke Greville, Sir Philip seems to have forecast to a fairly accurate extent the growth of the then downtrodden Dutch Republic, its eventual relief from the tyranny of Spain, and its maritime contests with England.

Thus, we find Pepys recording in his Diary on New Year's Day, 1668: "Among other things my Lord Crewe did turn to a place in the life of Sir P. Sidney, wrote by Sir Fulke Greville, which do foretell the present condition of the nation in relation to the Dutch to the very degree of a prophecy, and is so remarkable that I am resolved to buy one of them."

On January 2nd the entry continues: "By the way did find with difficulty the life of Sir Philip Sidney: and the bookseller told me that he had sold four within this week or two, which is more than he ever sold in all his life of them; and he cannot imagine what should be the reason of it; but I suppose it is from the same reason of people's observing of this part therein, touching his prophesying our present condition here in England, in relation to the Dutch."

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#### THOMAS SIDNEY.

It is astonishing that so little should be known about this, the youngest brother of Sir Philip Sidney. It is with great difficulty that any details of his career can be obtained, and much that has been published concerning them is utterly false. Nearly all the biographers of Sir Philip have dubbed

him Sir Thomas Sidney, Knight ; but this is incorrect, for he was never knighted. Collins even passes over his career in silence, except for calling him a knight, which he was not. This lack of information about him is all the more extraordinary considering that he seems to have been rather an important personage. We find him, for instance, taking a very prominent part in the gorgeous funeral procession of his brother to St. Paul's, and distinguishing himself greatly for his valour in the war in the Netherlands, where he was present at the battle of Zutphen.

He was born March 25, 1569, whilst his father was engaged in Ireland, and Cecil was one of his godfathers. Educated at Shrewsbury School, he was one of the pupils selected to greet his uncle, Leicester, on his visit to that town. He married Margaret, daughter and heiress of Arthur Dakyns. Dying in July, 1595, without issue, he was buried at Kingston-upon-Hull. Sir Henry<sup>1</sup> considered him a promising youth, but not so clever as his brothers.

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#### DR. JOHN HAMMOND.

THIS pious and learned divine, one of the most worthy clergymen that the Anglican Church produced during the seventeenth century, was Rector at Penshurst from 1633-43. He was brother-in-law to Sir John Temple, an old friend of the Sidneys, and consequently uncle to the famous statesman, Sir William Temple, who was educated by him at Penshurst. Besides being vicar of the parish, Hammond was also private chaplain to the family at the place.

Not only was he a profound theologian and brilliant preacher, but he was also a very hard-working and conscientious village priest. To the poor in the neighbourhood of his living he was most kind. His charities

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<sup>1</sup> *Vide* his Correspondence.

were boundless, and in their disposal he was helped by his mother, who lived with him. At the outbreak of the Civil War, his Royalist principles got him, unfortunately, into serious trouble. A reward was offered for his apprehension, and he was compelled to flee at night, disguised, to Oxford. He was then appointed chaplain to King Charles, with whom he remained nearly up to the time of that monarch's execution. Hammond eventually found refuge at Westwood, the seat of Sir John Pakington, dying there in 1660.

Dr. Fell, Dean of Christ Church, afterwards an Archbishop, in his life of Hammond, his contemporary at Oxford, says regarding his going to Penshurst: "In the year 1633, the Reverend Dr. Frewen, the then president of his college, gave him the honour to supply one of his courses at the Court; where, the Right Honourable the Earl of Leicester happening to be an auditor, he was so deeply affected with the sermon, and took so just a measure of the merit of the preacher thence that the rectory of Penshurst being at that time void, and in his gift, he immediately offered him a presentation."

Dr. Hammond was a prolific writer of religious treatises.

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#### DATE OF ALGERNON SIDNEY'S BIRTH.

IN nearly all the printed memoirs of Algernon, the date is given in the year 1622. But this is incorrect. The various writers have apparently based their assumptions on Collins' information as to Algernon being at his death aged "about" sixty-one. According to his coffin-plate, he was beheaded in the sixty-first year of his age, which would make the year of his birth, 1623. It is pretty plain, however, by the registrars recording the births of his brothers and sisters, that he was born at Penshurst on the day I have named.

In a letter written by Algernon to his father from Rome

in April, 1661, he complains, "At my age, growing very near forty, and giving marks of my declining by the colour of my hair." According to my data he would, therefore, be about thirty-nine years and a half at the arrival of this letter at Penshurst, and surely he was capable of calculating his own age more accurately than Collins and Collins' copyists!

William Howitt in a charming chapter on Penshurst published in his "Visits to Remarkable Places," quoting from Lord Leicester's Household-book for 1625, observes with reference to items of "puddings," "mutton," &c., for Algernon: "If he (Algernon) was born in 1622, as has been asserted, he would now be only three years old, and would be in the nursery; but if in 1617, as is more probable, he would be eight, and thus at a more suitable age to be advanced to the dignity of a separate table!" But why, surely, should not a four-year-old boy (1621) eat puddings and mutton? Again, the fact of his tender years would be all the more likely to necessitate a separate allowance or table for him!

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#### DE GRAMONT'S "MEMOIRS."

IN the memoirs of the Count de Gramont, containing chronicles of the social history of the Court of Charles II. written by Count Anthony Hamilton, frequent reference is made to the handsome Henry Sidney. According to this collection of scandalous stories, the future Lord Romney was the best looking man of the whole Court—"more handsome than the beautiful Adonais"! Of his intrigue with the Duchess of York, the author says, "And just as indignation and jealousy began to provoke her spleen (the Duchess'), perfidious Cupid threw in the way of her attention and resentment the amiable countenance of the handsome Sidney; and whilst opening her eyes as to his personal perfections, closed them as to the deficiency of

his mental accomplishments. She was enamoured of him before she was aware of it ; but the good opinion which Sidney had of his own merit did not leave him long in ignorance of such a glorious conquest," &c.

The Duke of York, so the memoirs relate, considered Sidney the handsomest man in England.

It was of Count de Gramont that Algernon Sidney recorded his opinion that "he (de Gramont) is such a proud ass that he neither knows what is good, and won't believe any one else" !

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#### LADY SUNDERLAND AND HENRY SIDNEY.

THAT Lady Sunderland (the wife of the statesman) was on terms of close friendship with her lord's uncle, Henry Sidney, is evident from an examination of her Correspondence. As an instance of this, *inter alia*, the following extract from a letter written by her ladyship to Henry Sidney in August, 1679, is worth recording here :—

"My Lord and I, whenever we meet, bewail your absence ; this very day, he said he was not able to bear your being away longer than October, and I thought that too long for more reasons than one ; for besides the friendship I have for you, indeed you are wanted for advice. I have somewhat on my spirits that I must of necessity communicate to you, but 'tis a secret of such vast consequence that I am ruined if it be known to anybody living. Therefore, I dare not venture it but by an express, and then in cypher. I will get my lord's to copy, but he must not know the secret less than anybody else, but it imports you and him and all of us. It has given me the spleen more than I have ever had it in my life. Pray, when you know it, let it die with you, and resolve to follow my advice in assisting me, for you are equally concerned.

"For God's sake burn my letters ! I am fancying I am talking to you, and the trust I put in you leads me into a disclosing my thoughts beyond what is fit for a post. . . ."

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